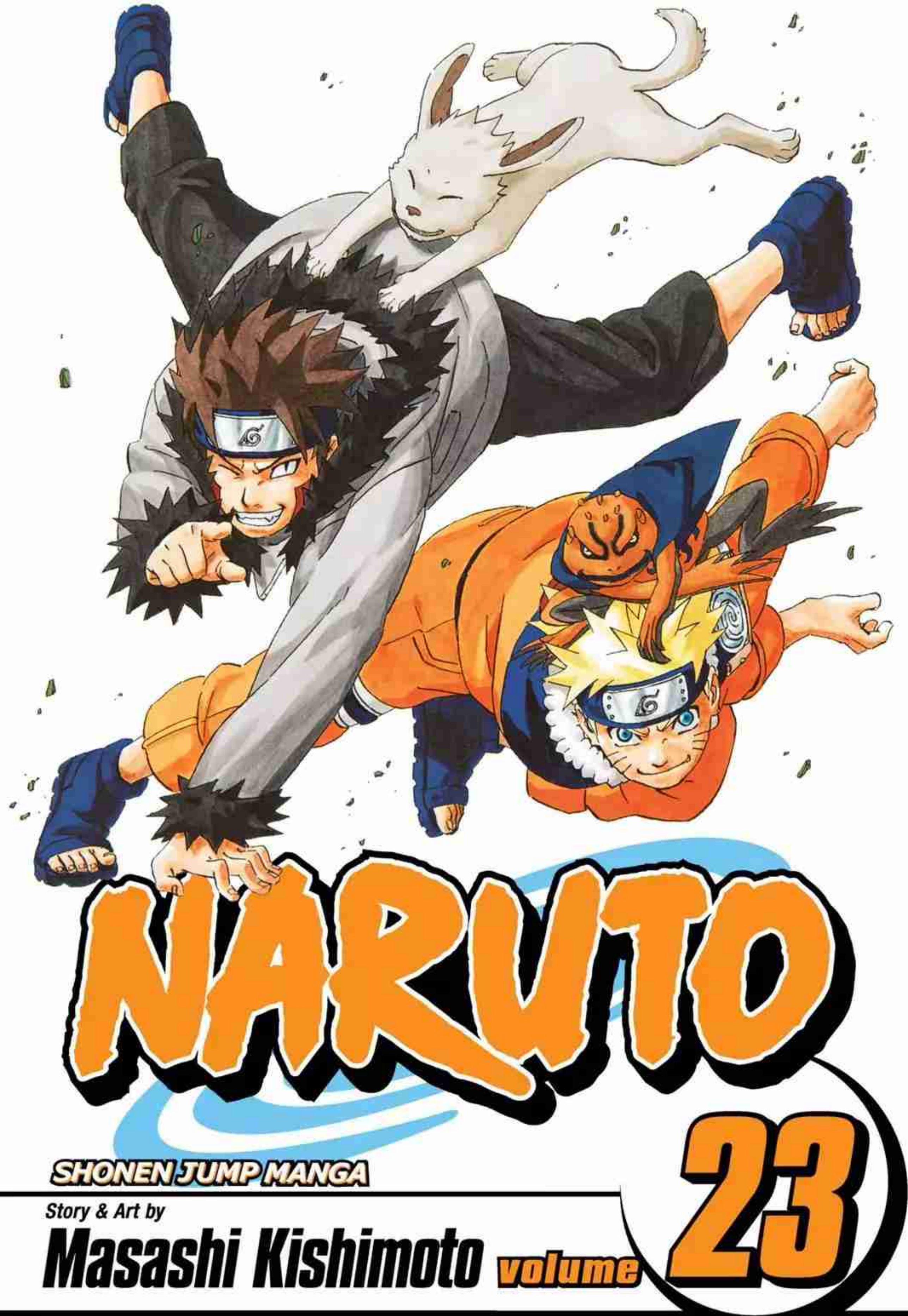
NARUTO
SHONEN JUMP MANGA
Story & Art by
Masashi Kishimoto
volume
23

It's been a year since I moved into my current apartment and I just recently realized something... I can see Mt. Fuji from my porch. It took me this long to notice!

—*Masashi Kishimoto, 2004*

岸本斉史

Author/artist Masashi Kishimoto was born in 1974 in rural Okayama Prefecture, Japan. After spending time in art college, he won the Hop Step Award for new manga artists with his manga **Karakuri** (Mechanism). Kishimoto decided to base his next story on traditional Japanese culture. His first version of **Naruto**, drawn in 1997, was a one-shot story about fox spirits; his final version, which debuted in **Weekly Shonen Jump** in 1999, quickly became the most popular ninja manga in Japan.

NARUTO VOL. 23
The SHONEN JUMP Manga Edition

STORY AND ART BY MASASHI KISHIMOTO

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PARENTAL ADVISORY
NARUTO is rated T for Teen and is recommended for ages 13 and up. This volume contains realistic and fantasy violence.

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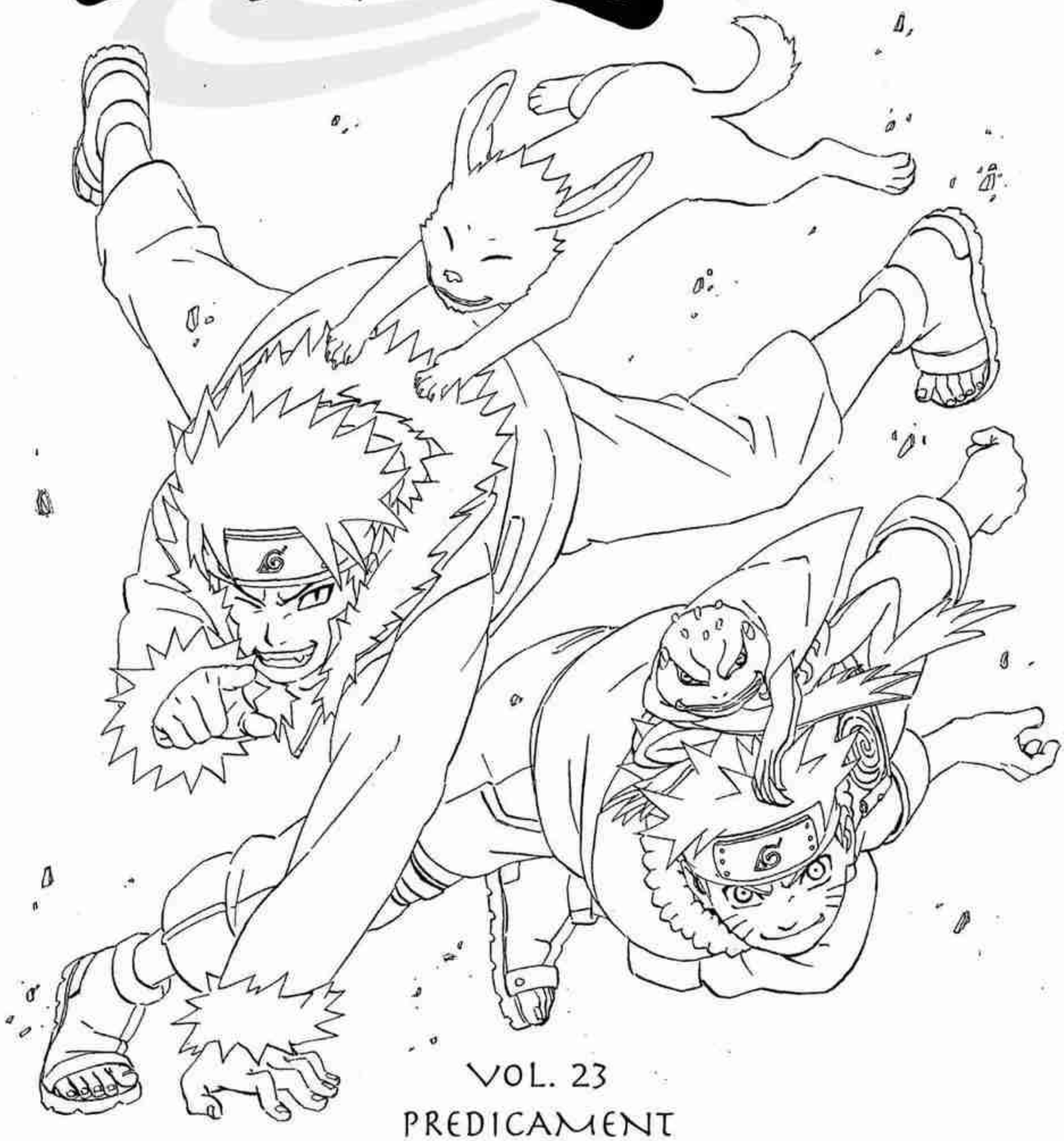
SHONEN JUMP MANGA EDITION

NARUTO



VOL. 23

PREDICAMENT

STORY AND ART BY

MASASHI KISHIMOTO

CHARACTERS

Sasuke
サスケ

Naruto
ナルト

Sakura
サクラ

The Sound Ninja Four

The Story So Far...

Twelve years ago a destructive nine-tailed fox spirit attacked the ninja village of Konohagakure. The *Hokage*, or village champion, defeated the fox by sealing its soul into the body of a baby boy. Now that boy, Uzumaki Naruto, has grown up to be a ninja-in-training, learning the art of ninjutsu with his cellmates Sakura and Sasuke.

Naruto and company take on the Chûnin Selection Exams but suffer a sudden attack from Orochimaru in the Forest of Death. Orochimaru leaves a curse mark on Sasuke's body and vanishes, only to return during the final round to launch *Operation Destroy Konoha!* While Naruto battles Gaara, the Third Hokage falls to Orochimaru.

After the funeral, the mysterious Tsunade becomes Fifth Hokage. Sasuke flees Konohagakure with the Sound Ninja Four. Shikamaru and a cell hurry to pursue Sasuke, but Choji and then Neji are struck down by the Sound Ninja. Can Sasuke be saved from himself?!

NARUTO

VOL. 23
PREDICAMENT

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Number 200: According to Plan...!!

SHUUU
DOESN'T WASTE ANY TIME, DOES HE?!
SHF
TAK
FWIP
ZWIP

READ THIS WAY
EAT THIS...
FOOSH
SHO
OM
TARENKEN! MULTIPLE FISTS BARRAGE!!
FWUP
FWUP
FWUP
FAP FAP FAP FAP FAP

EE EE EE
ERHW

READ THIS WAY
SHADOW DOPPEL-GANGER TRANSFOR-MATION...?
RASEN-GAN! SPIRAL CHAKRA SPHERE!!
Fwip
GRAB
WHAT? MY HAND ...!
UGH... KIBA, NOW!
IT'S POINT-LESS IF I GET YOUR HAND FIRST!

TSUUGA! TUNNELING FANG!!

BOOOF

!!

WHIRRRRRR

SHF

SSH

THEY WERE AIMING FOR ME FROM THE START!

BY LURING SAKON AND ME INTO ALIGN-MENT...

!

TA K

YOU THINK IT'S THAT EASY?!

SHOOOOM

GACK

?!

UNNG

A DIVER-SION...
NO... HE GOT ME.

KAGEMANE NO JUTSU! SHADOW POSSESSION TECHNIQUE!! SUCCESS!

HERE IT COMES!

HOOSH
?!

WHEEEE
EEEE

TAYUYA, QUIT DAY-DREAM-ING!

THAP

!!

I'M NOT ...!

FWAP

CLUNK

OOF!!

NO... I CAN'T DODGE.

WATCH OUT!

SHWIP

SIGH...

TOO MUCH INDIVIDUAL SKILL CAN BE A LIABILITY TOO.

SLOPPY AS ALWAYS.

CATCH!

SHINOO

WE'RE AT LEAST A STEP AHEAD OF THEM.

JUST AS PLANNED!!

KIBA! SHIKA-MARU!!

WHAK

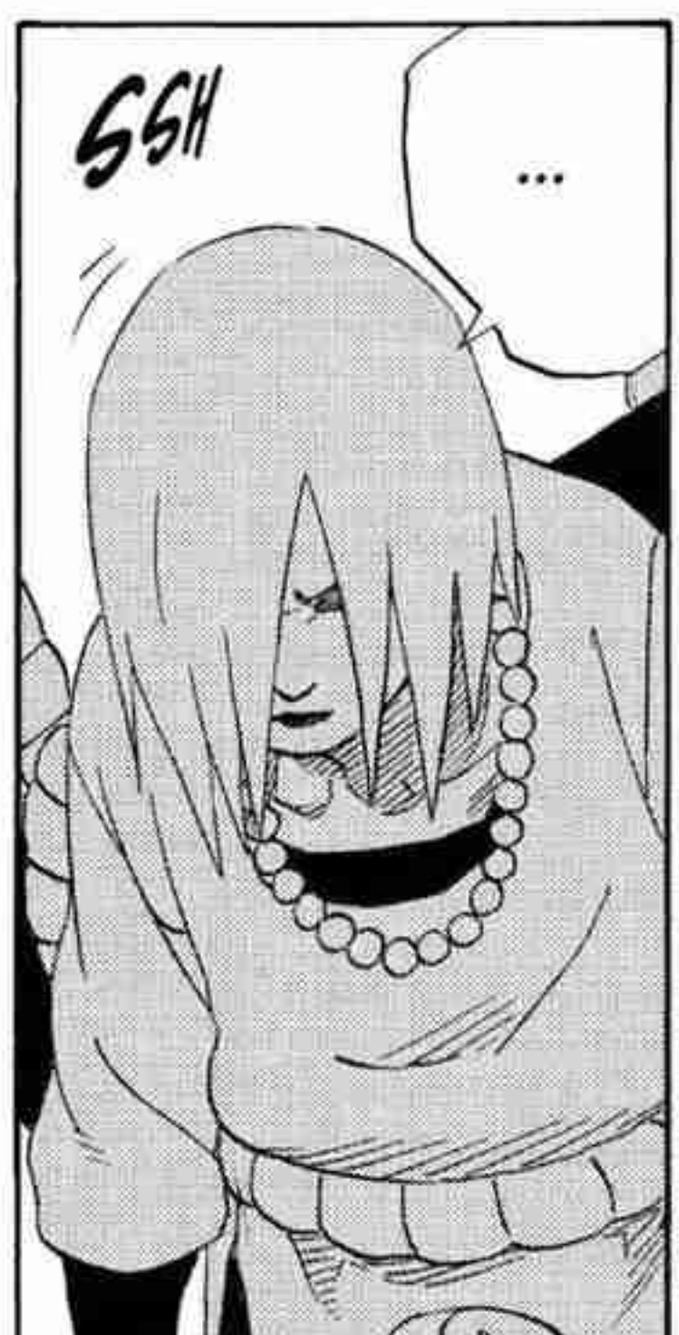
NICE JOB!

LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!
NARUTO, SHIKA-MARU.

YOU TRASH, DON'T MESS WITH US...
PUNKS...

SHWOO

...
TAK
TAK


SSH
...

TAK

YOU WON'T GET AWAY !!

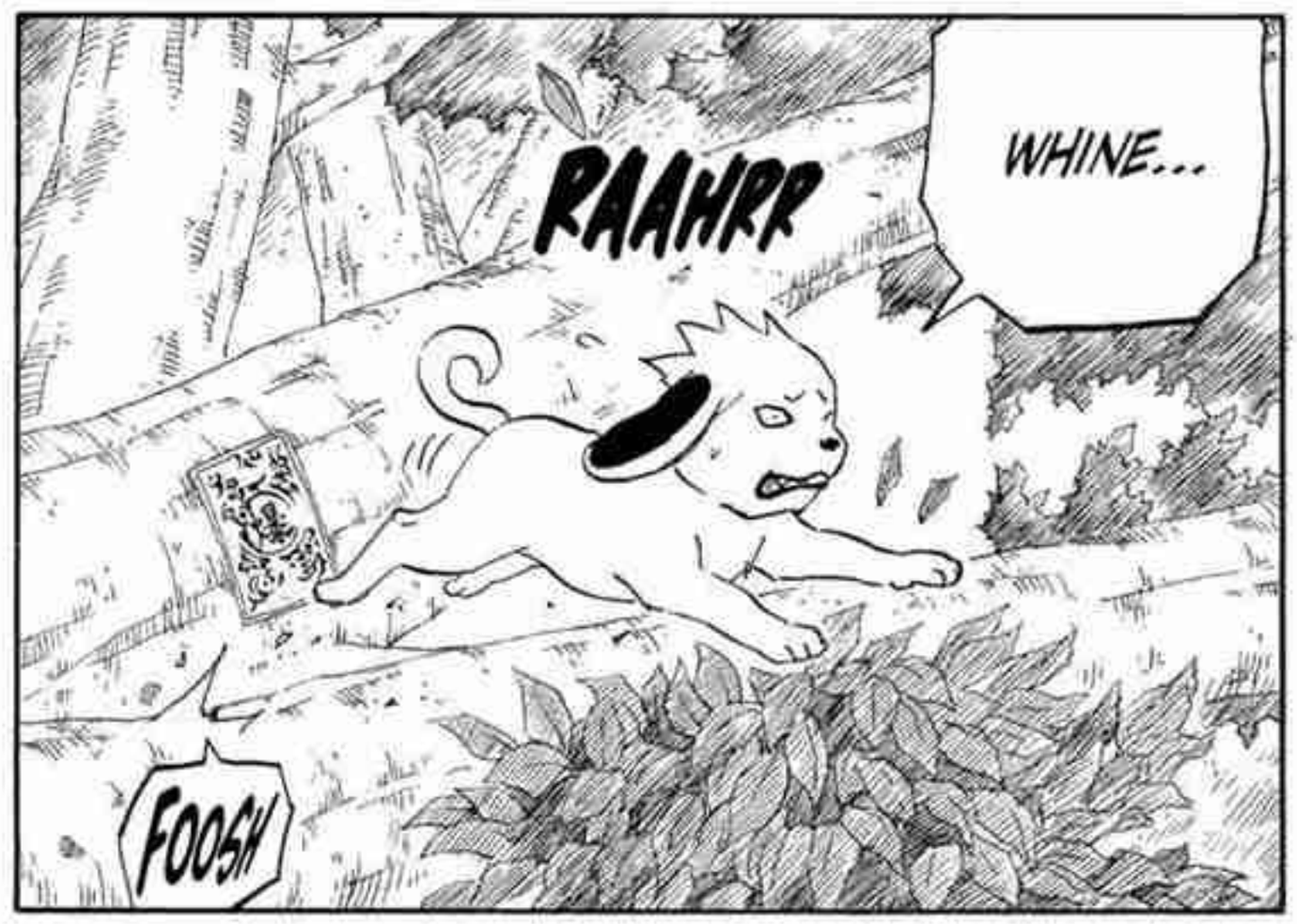
WOOF!!

AKA-
MARU!!

!
GRRRR

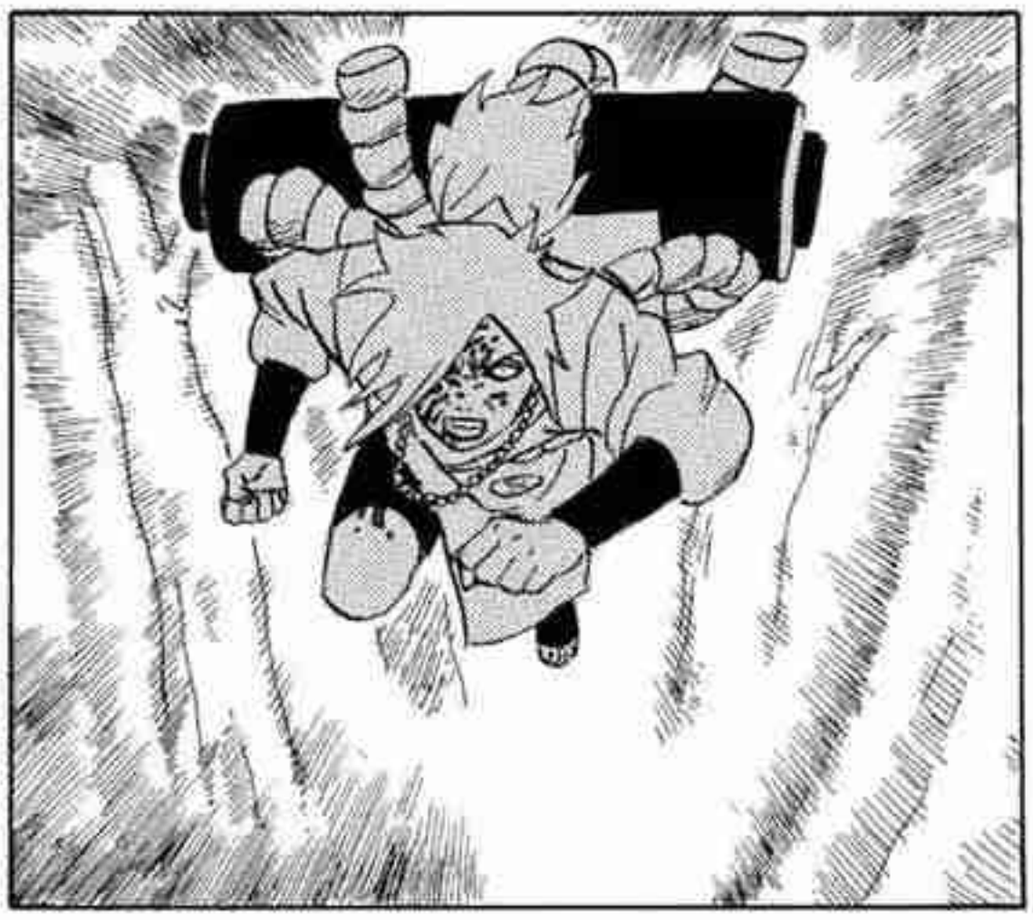
HURRY
BACK AS
SOON AS
IT'S SET!
!

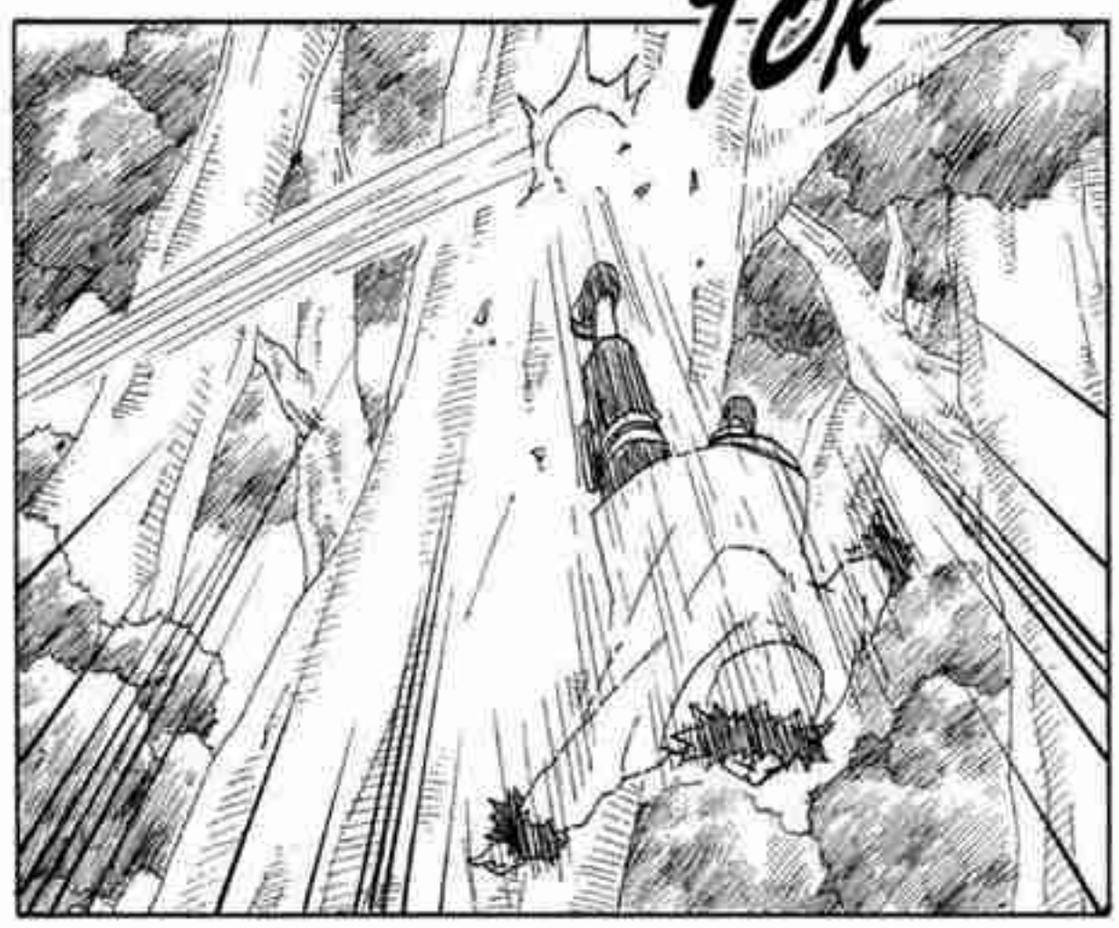
DON'T "WOOF" ME, MUTT!!



PUSH
爆

WHIMPER...




TOK

WHIMPER...

BL

AAA

BOOF

NGH...

UGH!

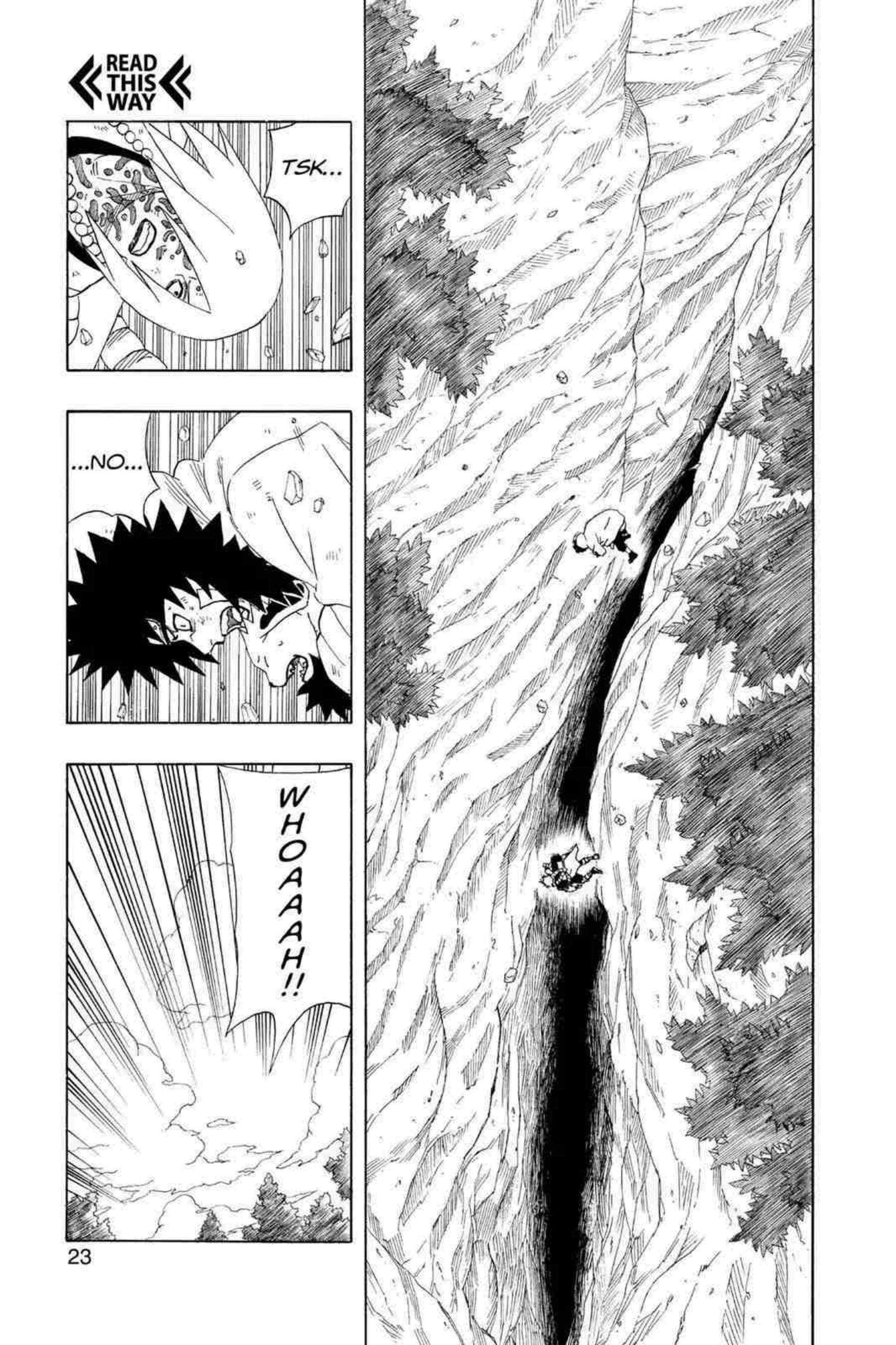
BA

SHF

KIBA! AKA-MARU!!

OH, NO...

SCRAPE


READ THIS WAY
TSK...
...NO...
WHOAAAH!!

NO WAY! WHAT'S WITH THEM?!
HERE COMES THE OTHER ONE!!

PUNKS!!
PUSH

NARUTO, YOU GO AHEAD WITH THE COFFIN!
OH, MAN... I'LL TAKE CARE OF IT.

!

JUST GO!

SHIKA-MARU ...
...

KIMIMARO.

?!

NARUTO
TM

Number 201: Miscalculation...!!

FUSH
FUSH
CLAK

TOK
PAP
TAK
WHOA!
RUSTLE
SHHF
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
WHAT?!
...
I MISCAL-CULATED ...
...SORRY... NARUTO.
?!

YOU'RE LATE... TAYUYA.

THIS FROM THE FORMER MEMBERS OF THE SOUND NINJA FIVE...

AND WHAT OF THE OTHER THREE?

...

?!

CAN'T YOU EVEN DIE...?

HMPH.

I NO LONGER MOVE USING FLESH...

I USE THE POWER OF MY MIND.

YOUR BODY...

WHY ARE YOU...?

YOUR BODY CAN'T...

UGH...

OROCHI-MARU...!

GRRR

I FEEL RELEASE FROM THE PRISON OF THE FLESH...

...AS IF I CAN TOUCH JUST A SMALL PART OF LORD OROCHIMARU'S DREAM.

I CAN FEEL IT A LITTLE NOW...

GASP
!!

I HAVE TO ASSESS... STAY COOL...
...ANOTHER FREAK TO DEAL WITH...

THIS IS THE DREAM VESSEL...
封
封
BUT YOU ALL WERE TOO LATE...

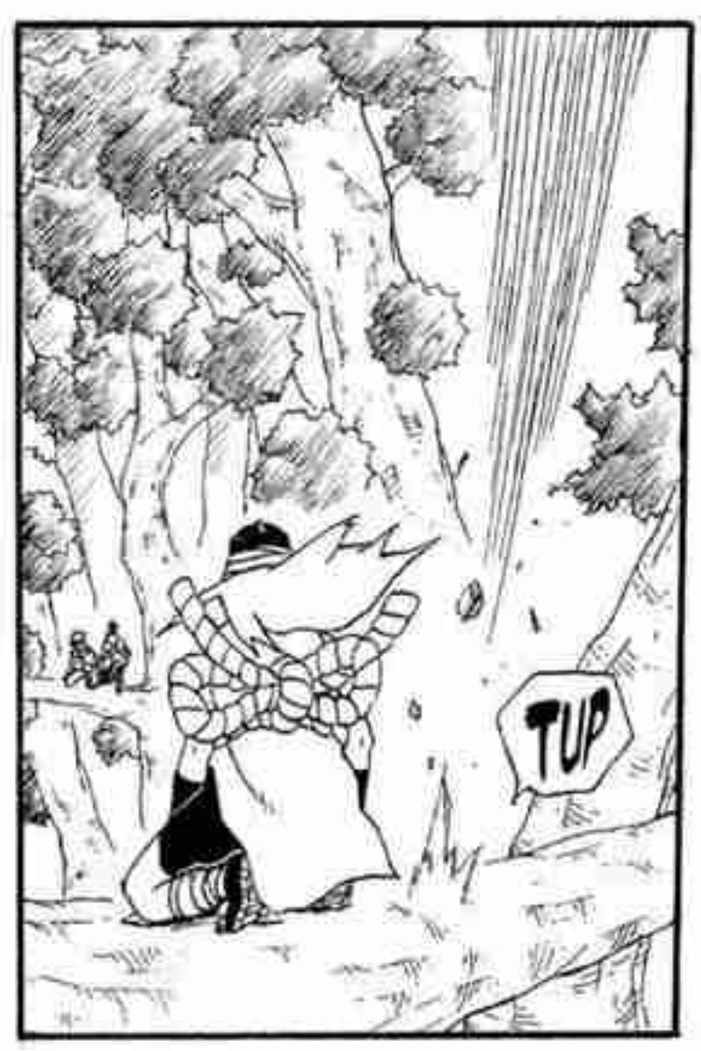
READ THIS WAY
GIVE SASUKE BACK!!
FOO
SH
HEY! I DON'T UNDER-STAND A WORD YOU'RE SAYING!
!!
GHF
HEY, NARUTO ...
!!
WAIT!!

TAYUYA...
TSK...
TMP
SHWOO

PAP
UNH...

...SO YOU CAN LIVE TO FULFILL YOUR MISSION.
SHF
I WON'T KILL YOU...
!!

TSK...
SHF


TUP

I'LL LEAVE THESE TWO PESTS TO YOU.

FWIP

WE MUST BRING SASUKE BACK TO KONOHA.
...

RATS!
RATS!
CALM DOWN, NARUTO!

...

I JUST CAN'T FIGURE OUT HOW.

!
NARUTO!
DO AS I SAY!
HMPH... HE'S A TYPICAL SHORT-RANGE IDIOT ONLY GOOD AT SHADOW DOPPEL-GANGERS.
AND HE'S A MID-RANGE TYPE WHO TIES ENEMIES UP WITH HIS SHADOW ARTS... AND A SHARP-MINDED LEADER...
THAT'S IT! TIME TO FINISH THIS!
BRING IT, PUNKS.
YEAH ...!
GOT IT...?

ALRIGHT!!

FOO

LET'S GO, NARUTO!!

SH

IT'S TWO ON ONE!!

WE CAN TAKE HER!

YOU'RE OVER!

TEAM-WORK? THIS IS CHEAT-ING!

WHAT?! YOU TRICKED ME!

TAK

SCUFF

!!

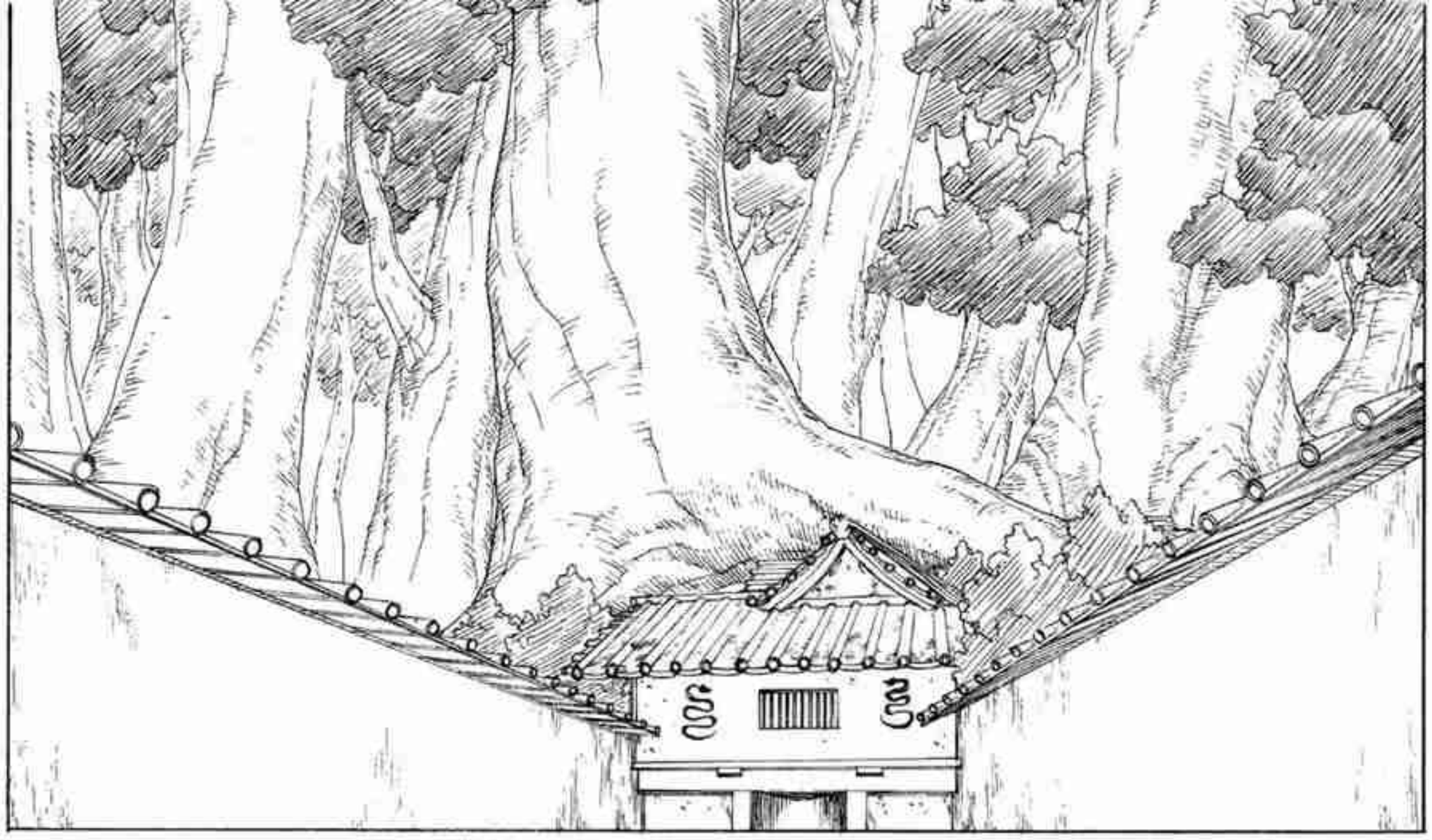
REMEMBER... JUTSU ISN'T ALL A NINJA KNOWS.

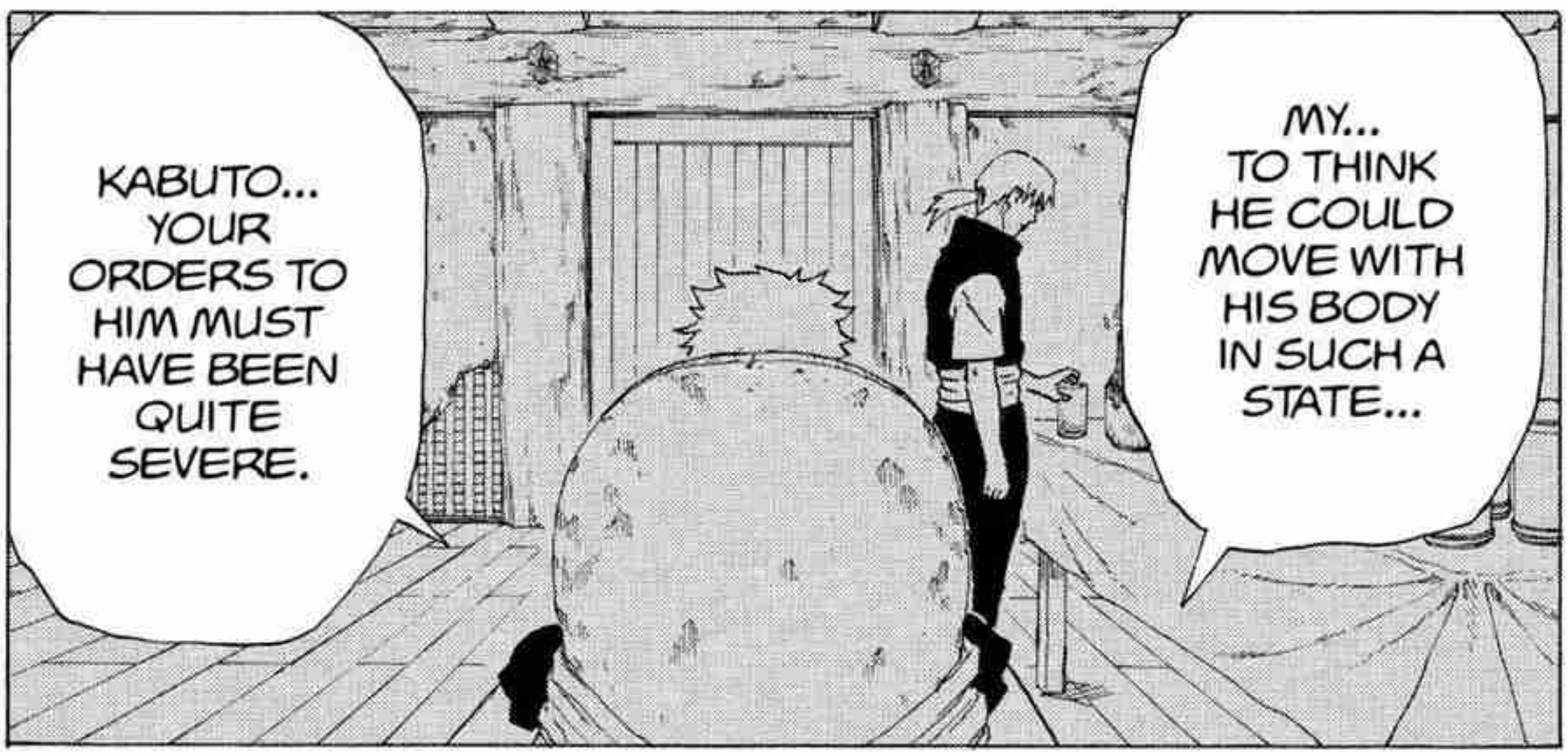
WELL... AT LEAST NARUTO GOT AWAY...

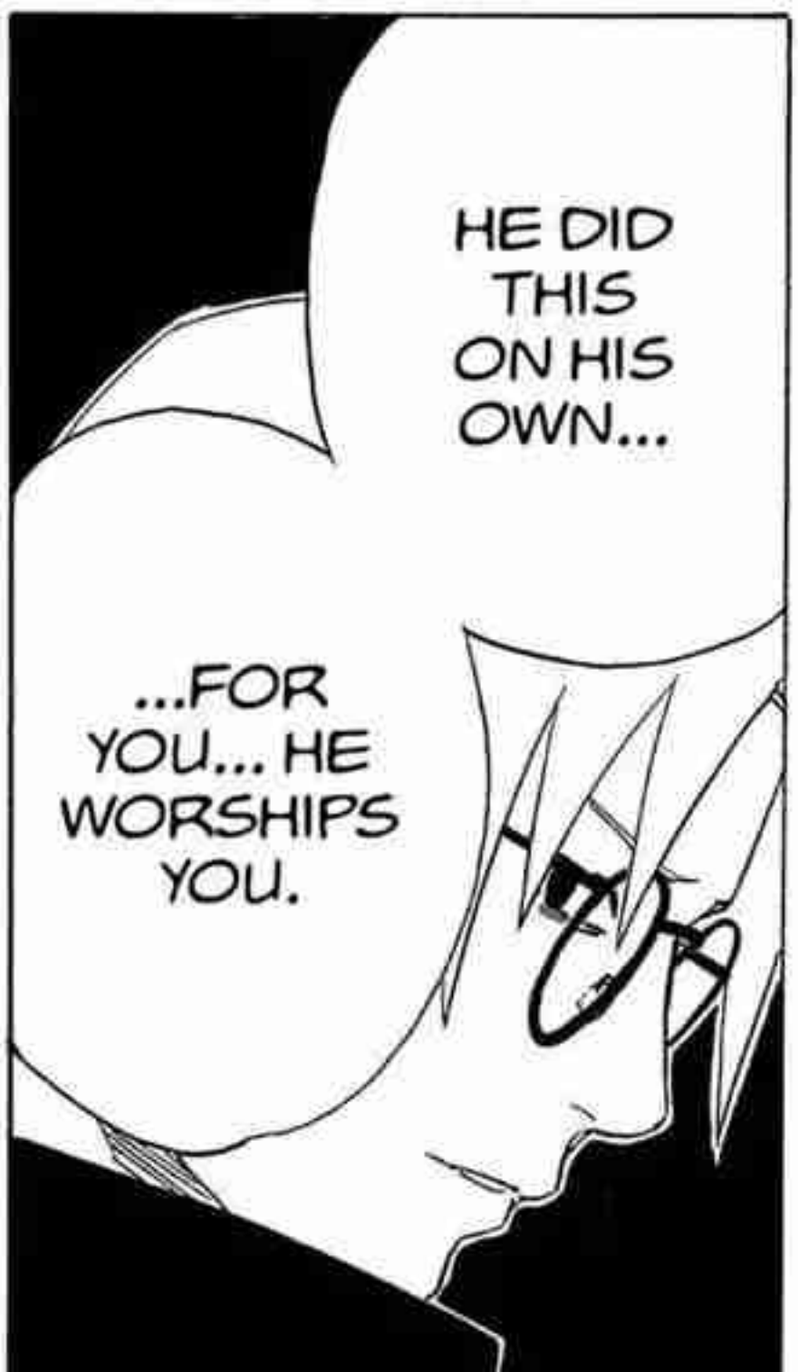
YOU CAN'T BE FOOLED TWICE?

TUP

HANG IN THERE, SHIKAMARU!




KABUTO... YOUR ORDERS TO HIM MUST HAVE BEEN QUITE SEVERE.
MY... TO THINK HE COULD MOVE WITH HIS BODY IN SUCH A STATE...


HE DID THIS ON HIS OWN...
...FOR YOU... HE WORSHIPS YOU.

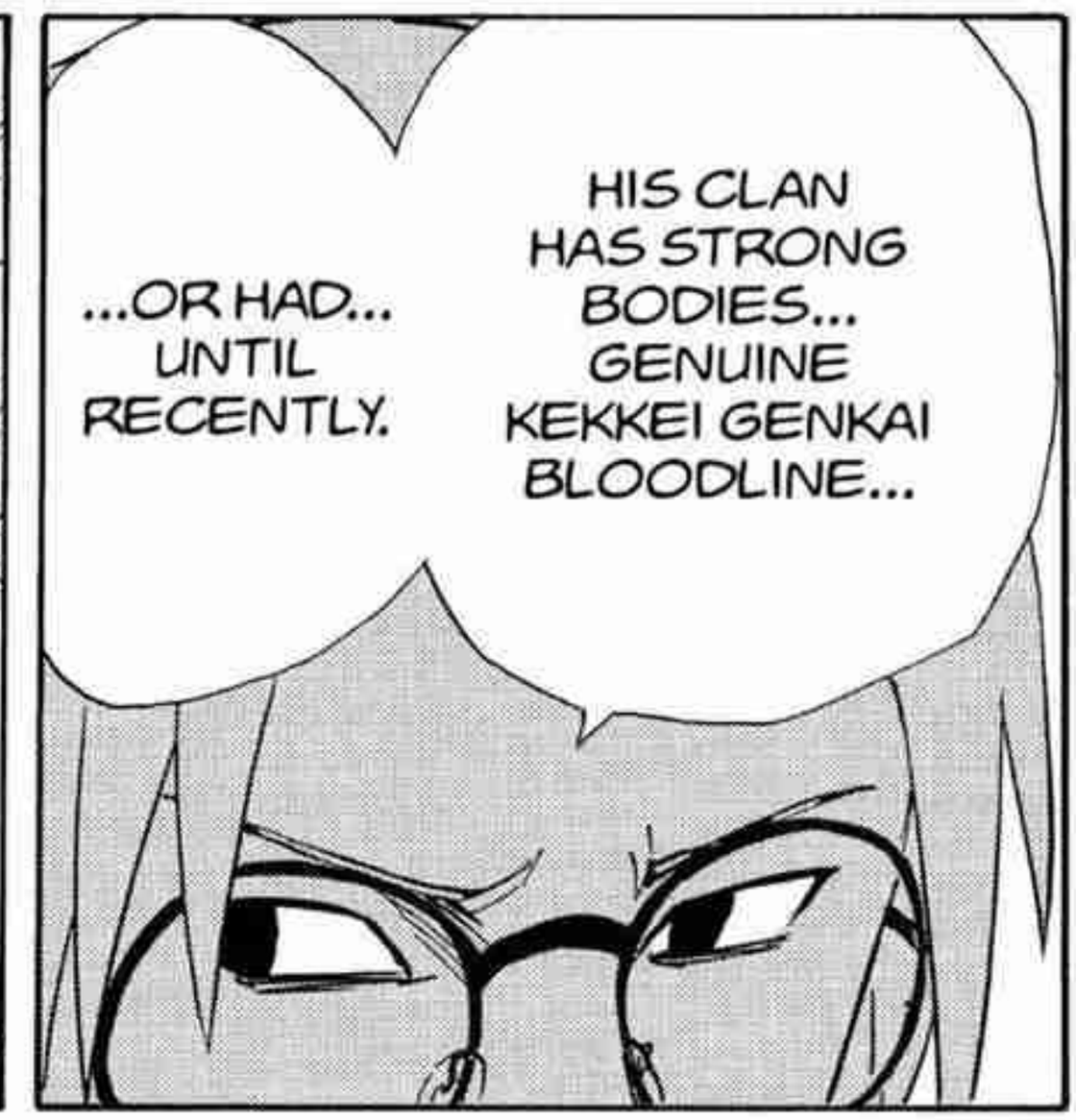
I'M NOT VERY FOND OF COERCION ...
NO, I GAVE NO ORDERS ...

KABUTO...

YOU ARE DESPICABLE...

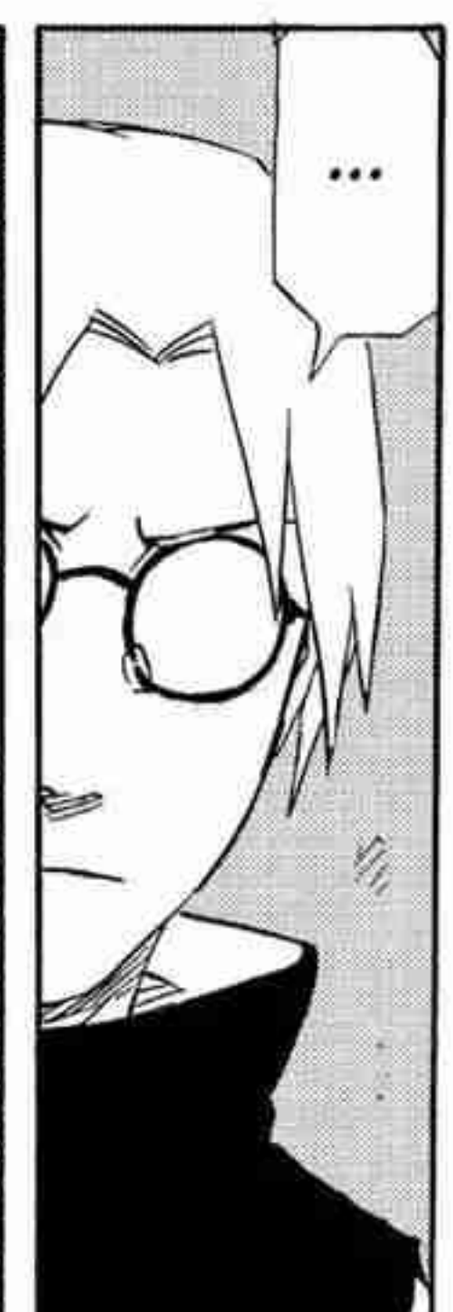
READ
THIS
WAY

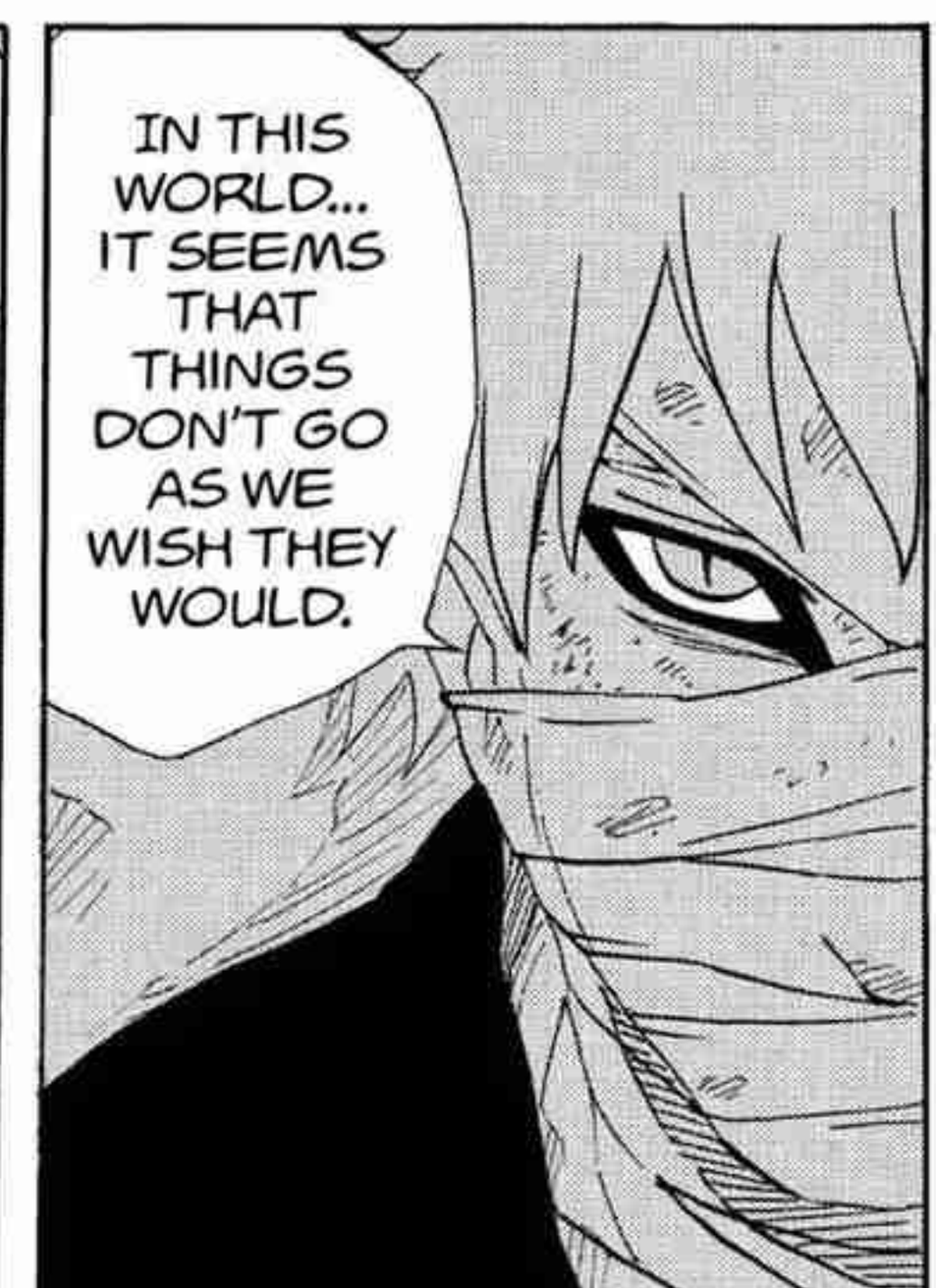
I STILL THINK... HE WAS THE ONE I WISHED FOR IN MY HEART... THE LEAST LIKELY TO BE DESTROYED. KIMIMARO.
YES... WHENEVER I THINK OF HAVING LOST HIM MY SKIN CRAWLS...


...OR HAD... UNTIL RECENTLY.
HIS CLAN HAS STRONG BODIES... GENUINE KEKKEI GENKAI BLOODLINE...

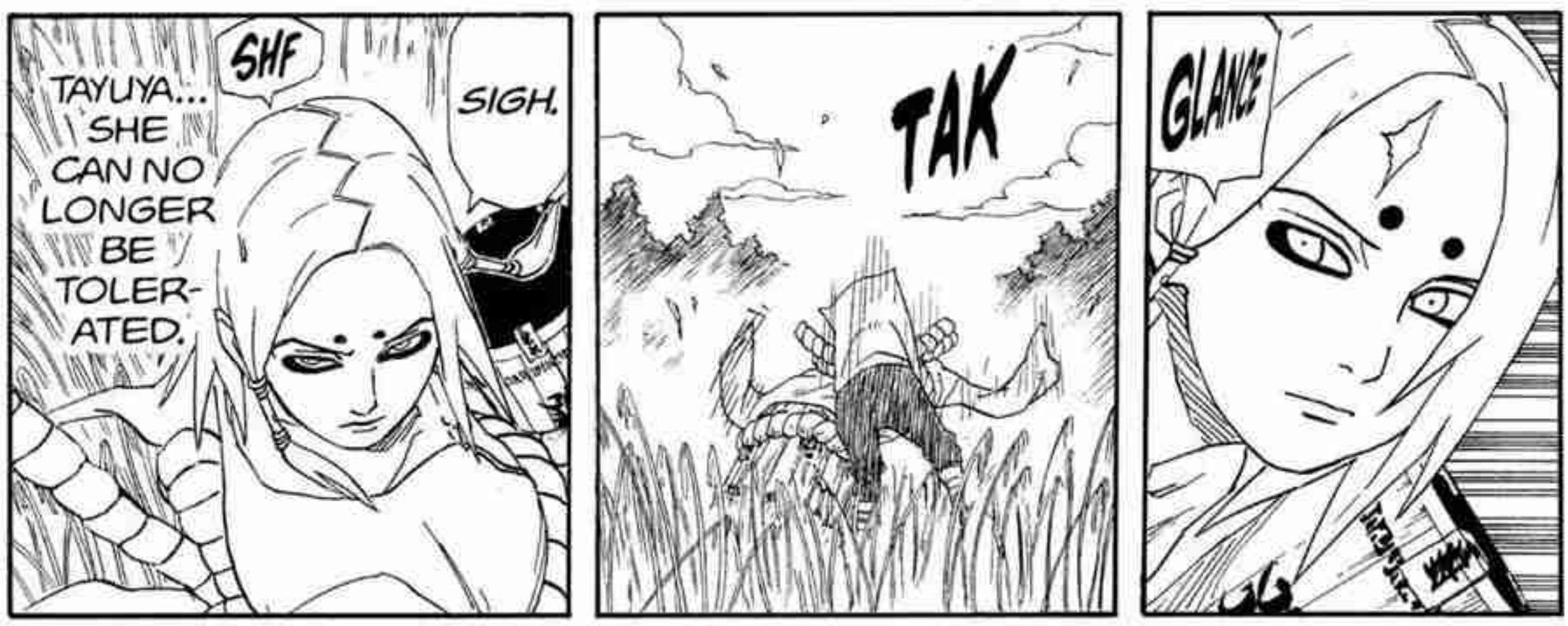
AND YOU WOULDN'T SUFFER LIKE THIS.
HAD HE NOT BEEN ILL, THE HOKAGE'S ASSASSI-NATION WOULD'VE GONE SMOOTHLY.
ALSO...

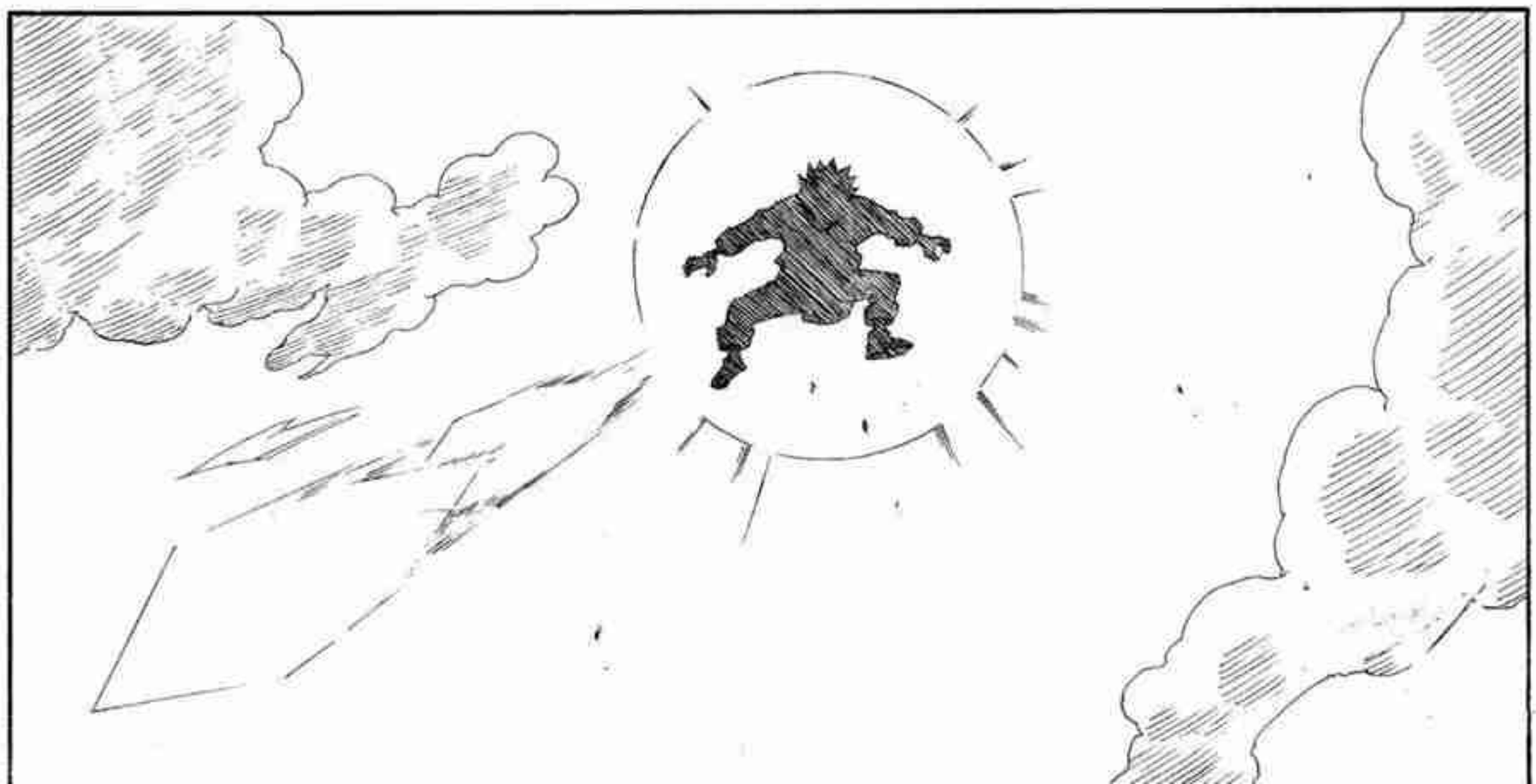
THAT TOO IS MERELY A MATTER OF TIME... LORD OROCHI-MARU.


...

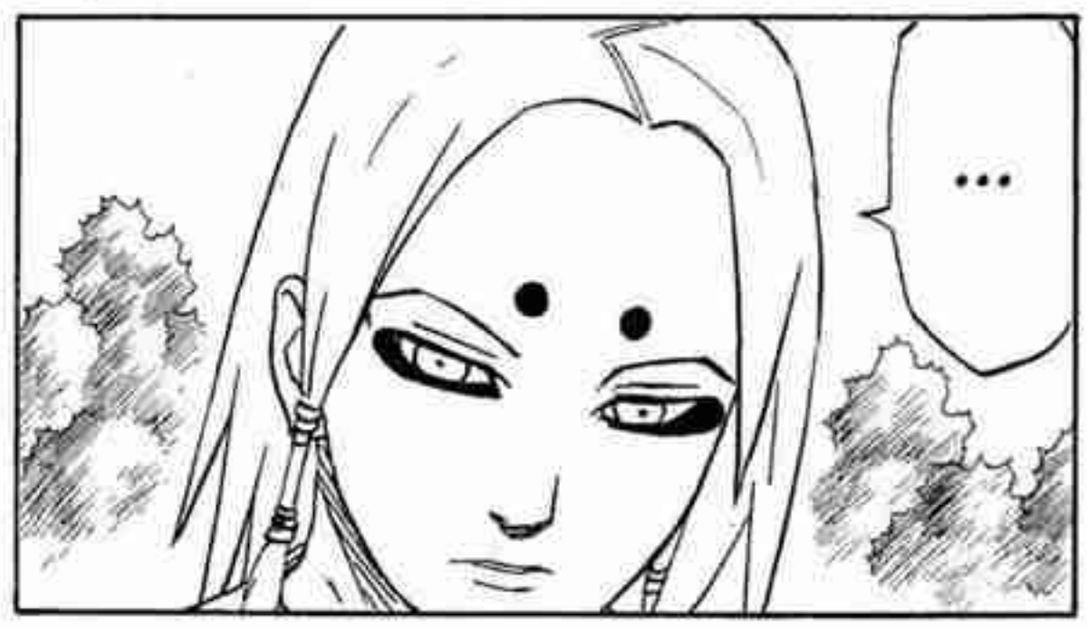

IN THIS WORLD... IT SEEMS THAT THINGS DON'T GO AS WE WISH THEY WOULD.

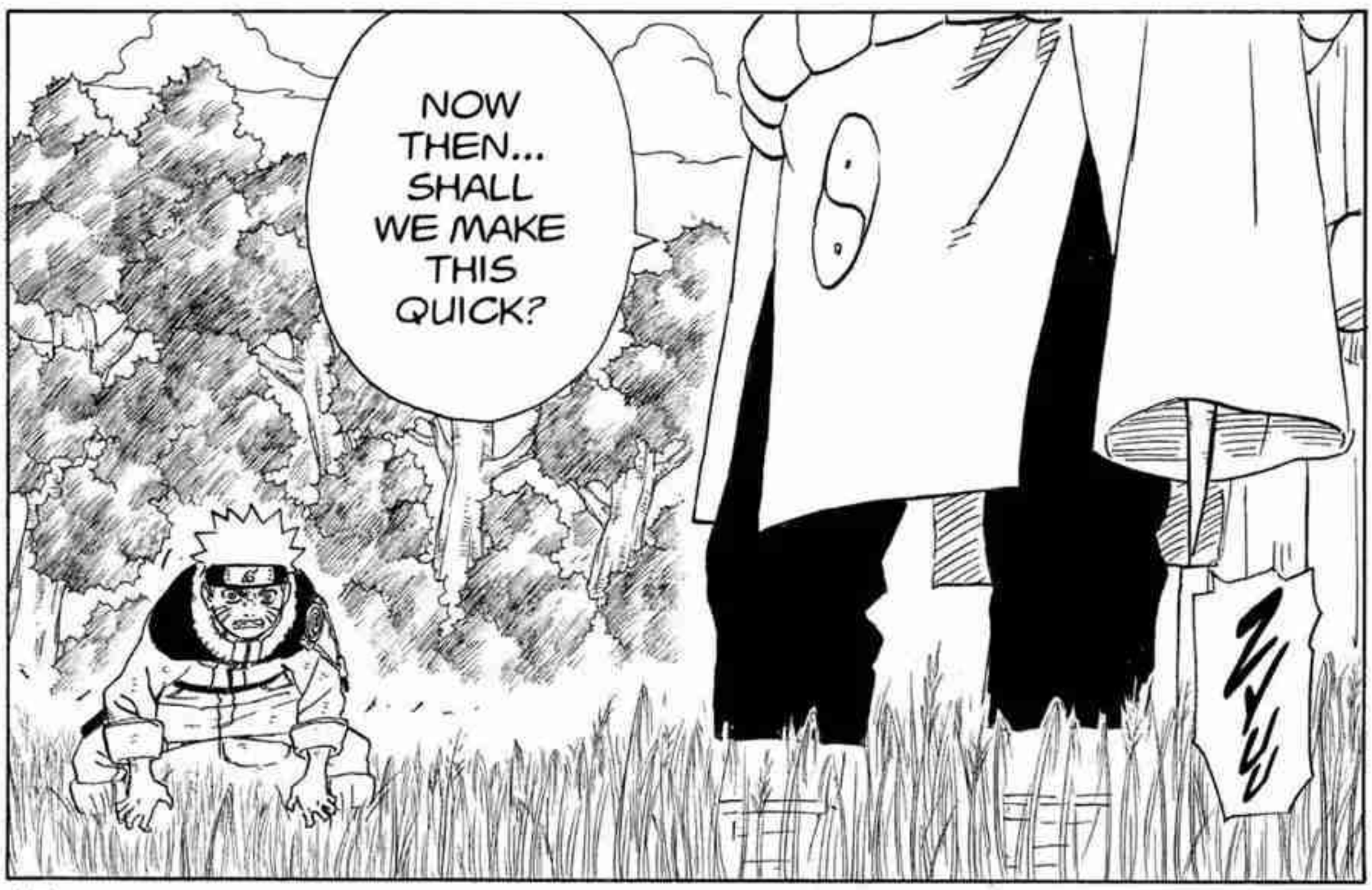
SHOOM





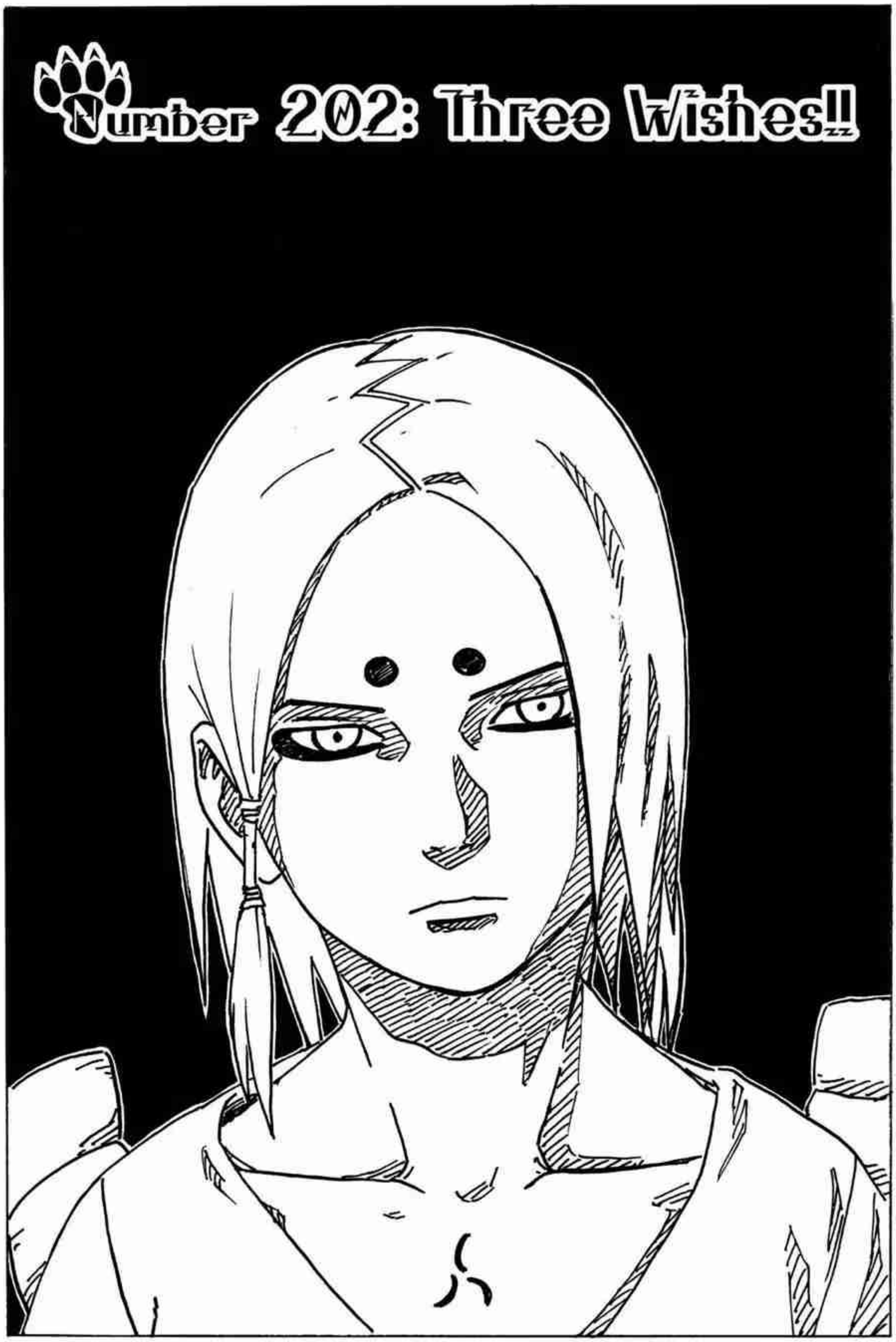
HEY...!

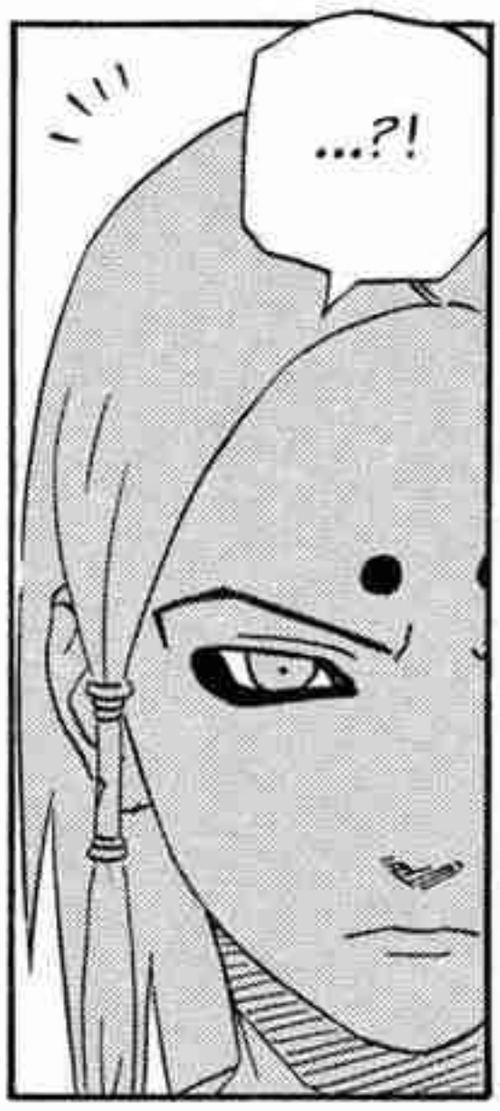


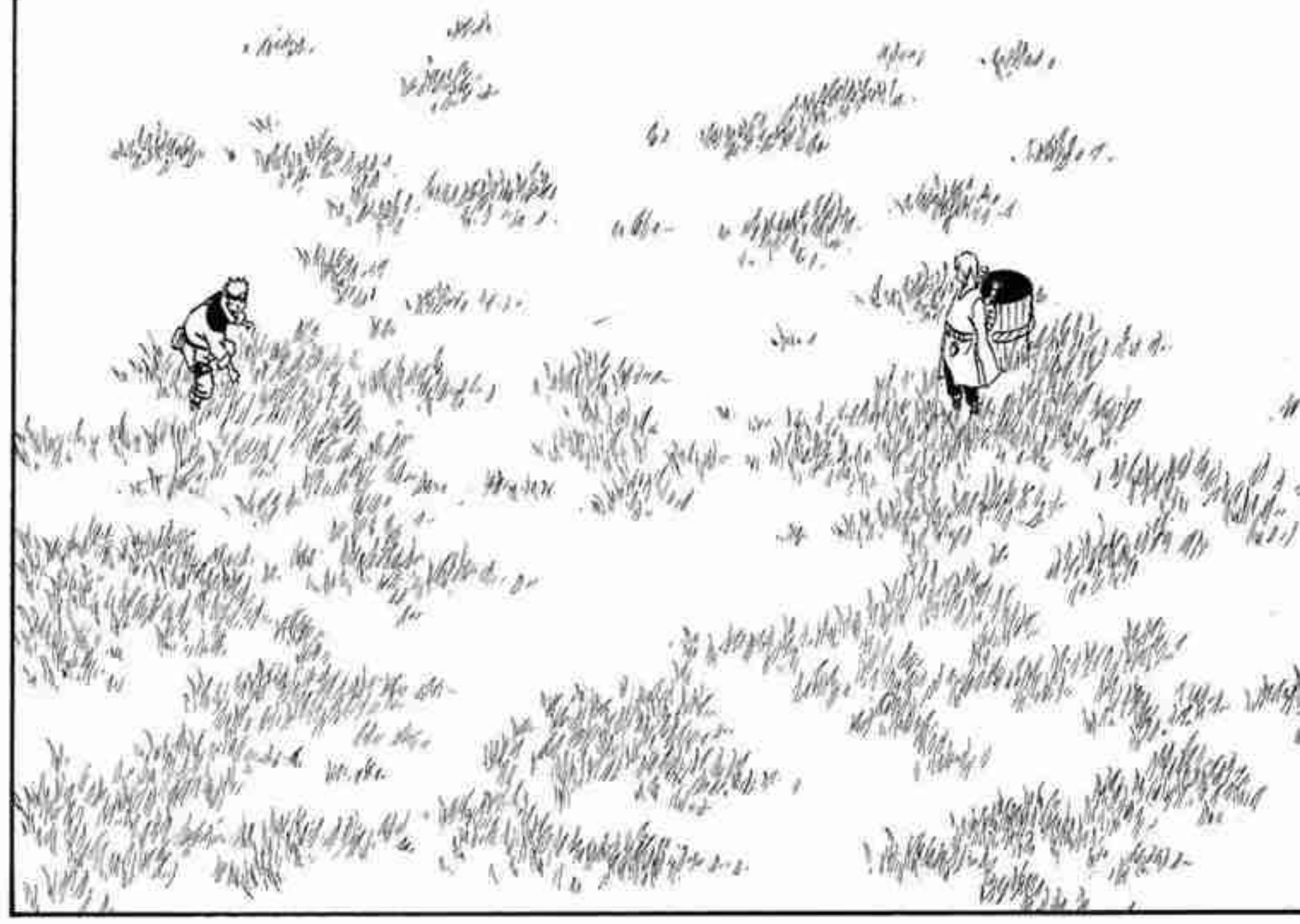


NARUTO
TM

Number 202: Three Wishes!!




...?!



THOSE EYES...
YOU...
...

HMM... HIS... CHAKRA IS PECULIAR.

GRRR

WHAT DOES HE WANT WITH SASUKE?!
WHAT'S OROCHI-MARU DOING?!

READ THIS WAY
BUT IT TAKES TIME TO LEARN EVERY-THING.
LORD OROCHIMARU HAS ALREADY MASTERED THE ART OF IMMORTALITY.
...
IMMORTALITY DOESN'T MEAN YOUR FLESH LIVES ON AS IS...
BEFORE THE BODY DECAYS, ANOTHER STRONG BODY MUST BE OBTAINED AS A VESSEL FOR THE SOUL.
WHAT'S THAT GOT TO DO WITH SASUKE?!
SASUKE ...?!
THEN ...

GRRR

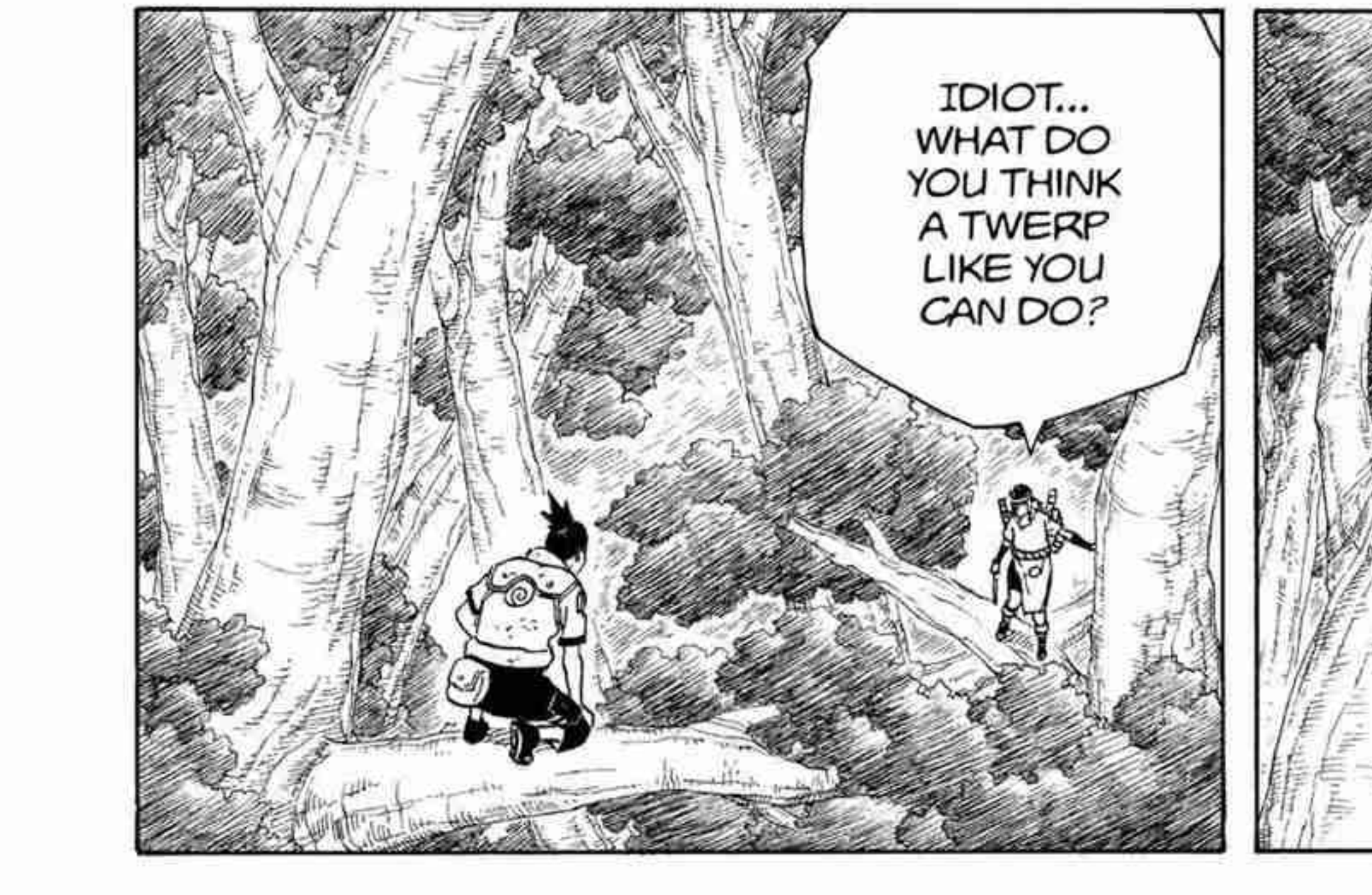
I WON'T LET THAT HAPPEN...

SSH

YES...

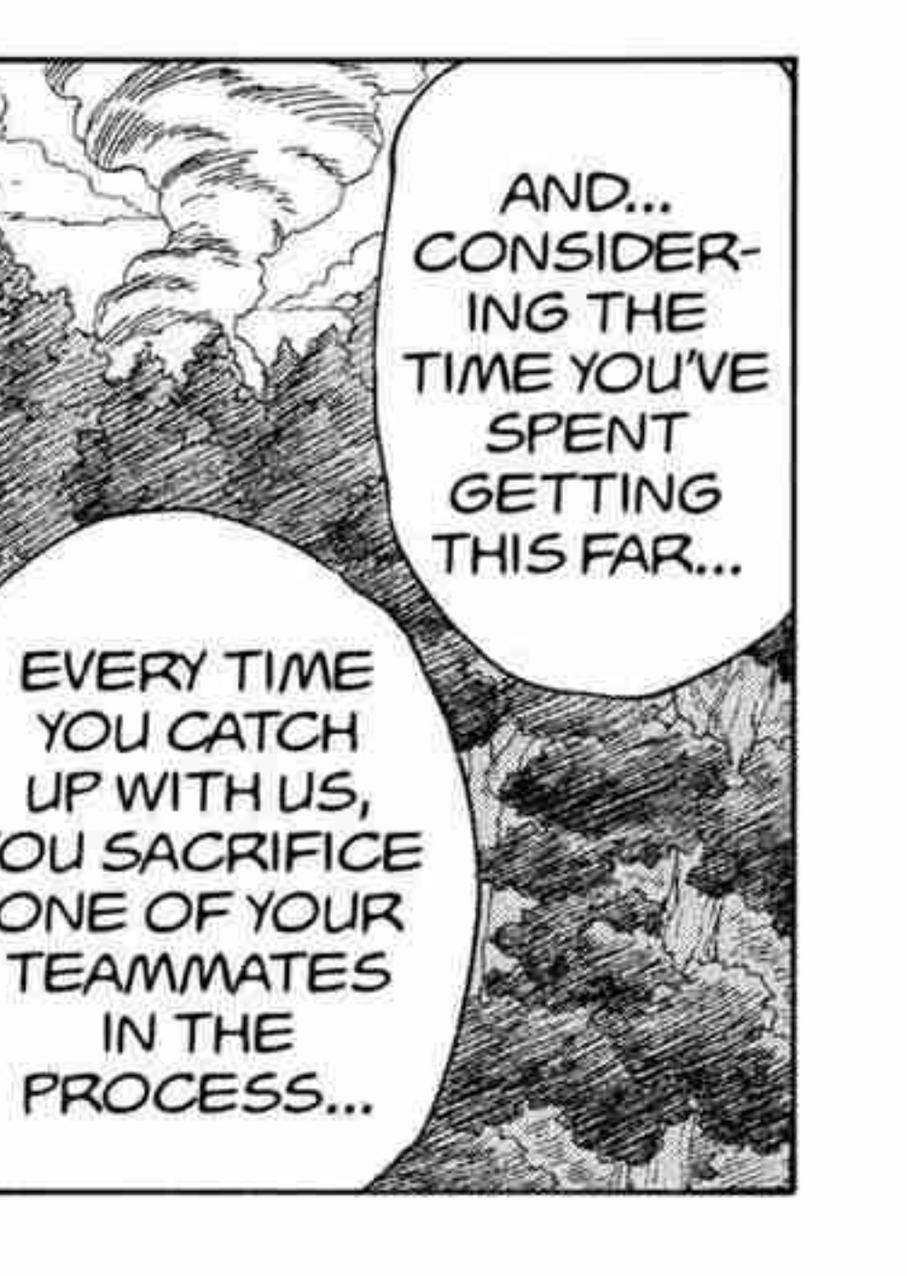
PRECISELY ...

READ
THIS
WAY


IDIOT... WHAT DO YOU THINK A TWERP LIKE YOU CAN DO?

IS THIS SASUKE, OR WHATEVER HIS NAME IS, SO IMPORTANT TO YOU?

...


AND... CONSIDERING THE TIME YOU'VE SPENT GETTING THIS FAR...
EVERY TIME YOU CATCH UP WITH US, YOU SACRIFICE ONE OF YOUR TEAMMATES IN THE PROCESS...

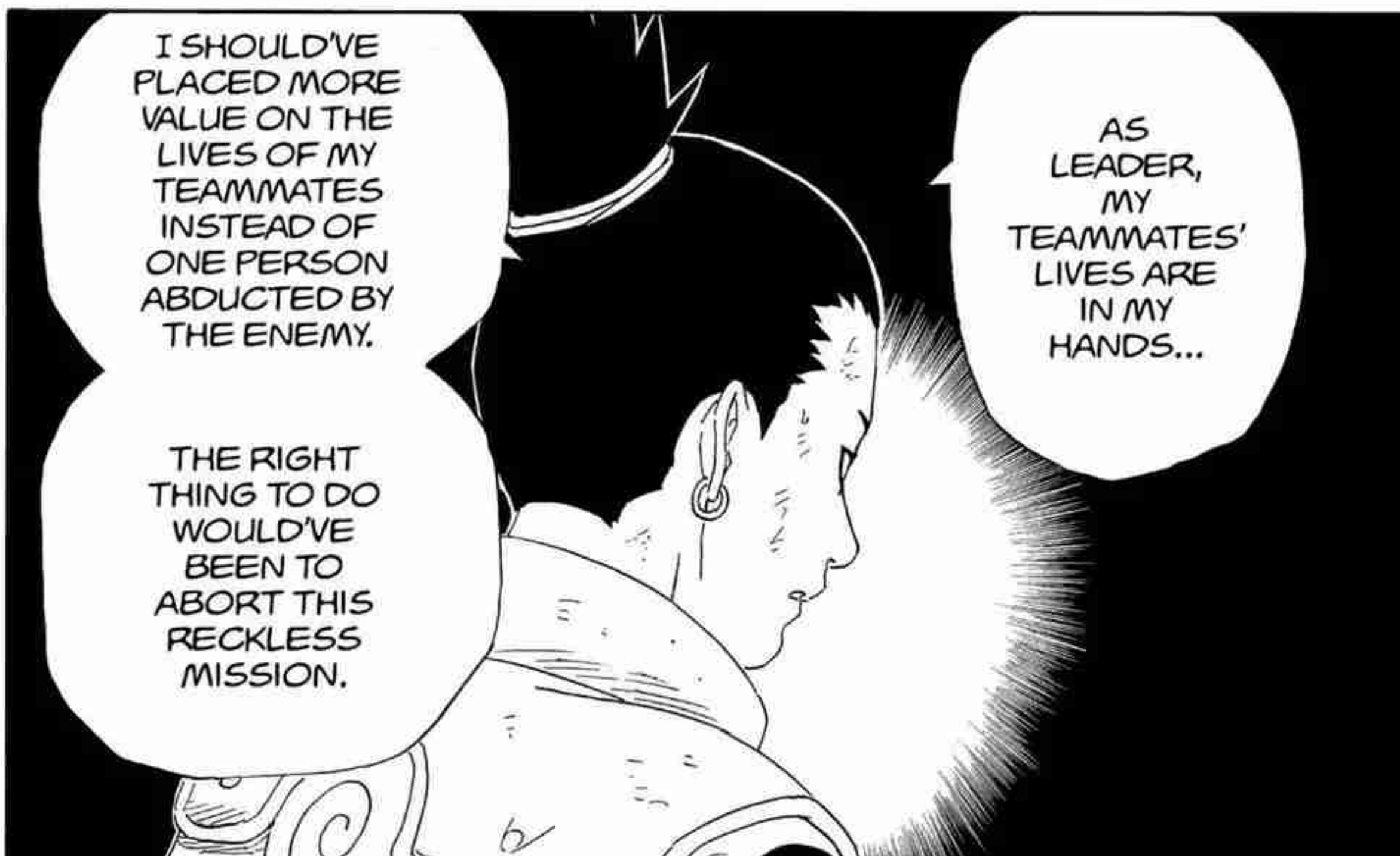
HEH HEH... SWEET, BUT A COMPLETELY USELESS GESTURE!
YOU'D SACRIFICE EVERYONE FOR JUST ONE TEAMMATE...?

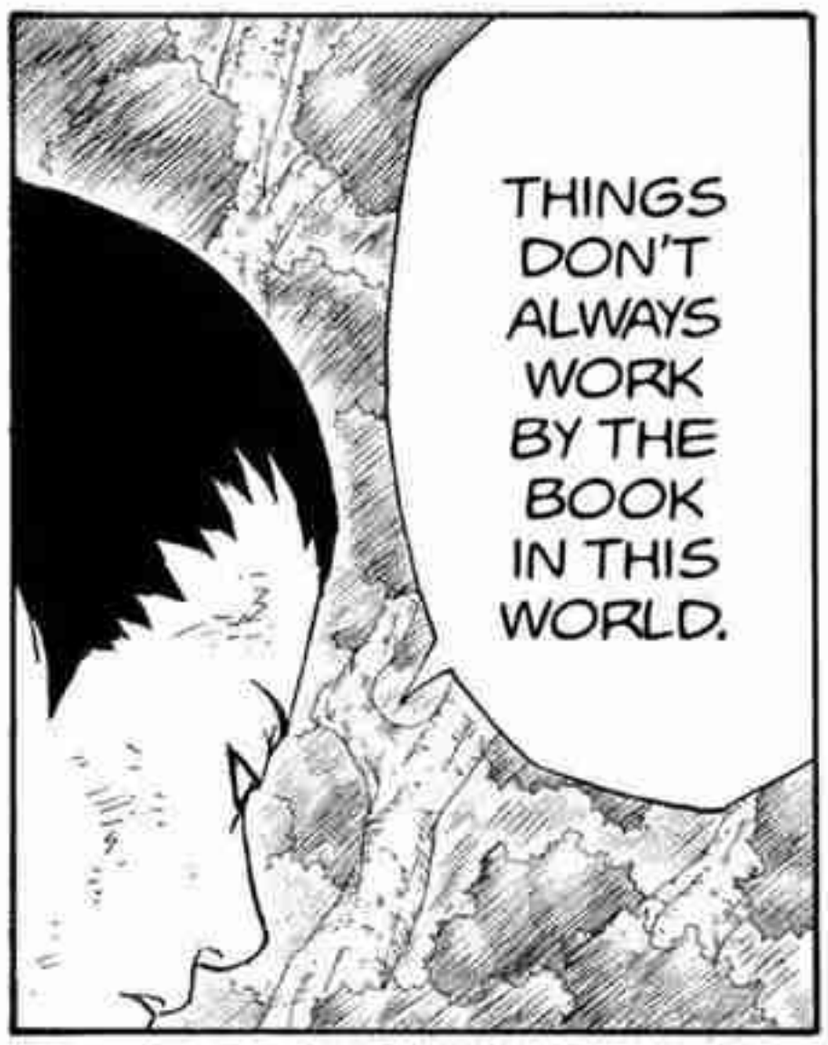
HAH...

...

...

I WAS TOO WORRIED ABOUT LOSING SOMEONE...
THIS IS MY FIRST TIME OUT AS THE LEADER...
I WASN'T SURE IF I'D MADE THE RIGHT DECISION.


I SHOULD'VE PLACED MORE VALUE ON THE LIVES OF MY TEAMMATES INSTEAD OF ONE PERSON ABDUCTED BY THE ENEMY.
THE RIGHT THING TO DO WOULD'VE BEEN TO ABORT THIS RECKLESS MISSION.
AS LEADER, MY TEAMMATES' LIVES ARE IN MY HANDS...


THINGS DON'T ALWAYS WORK BY THE BOOK IN THIS WORLD.

THEN, WHY DIDN'T YOU?

THERE'S NO ONE IN MY SQUAD LIKE THAT.
BESIDES, ABANDONING A TEAMMATE...
...TO PROTECT YOURSELF...?

ANYWAY, A LAZY DAYDREAMER LIKE ME IS A POOR EXCUSE FOR A LEADER...
ALL I CAN DO FOR MY COMRADES...

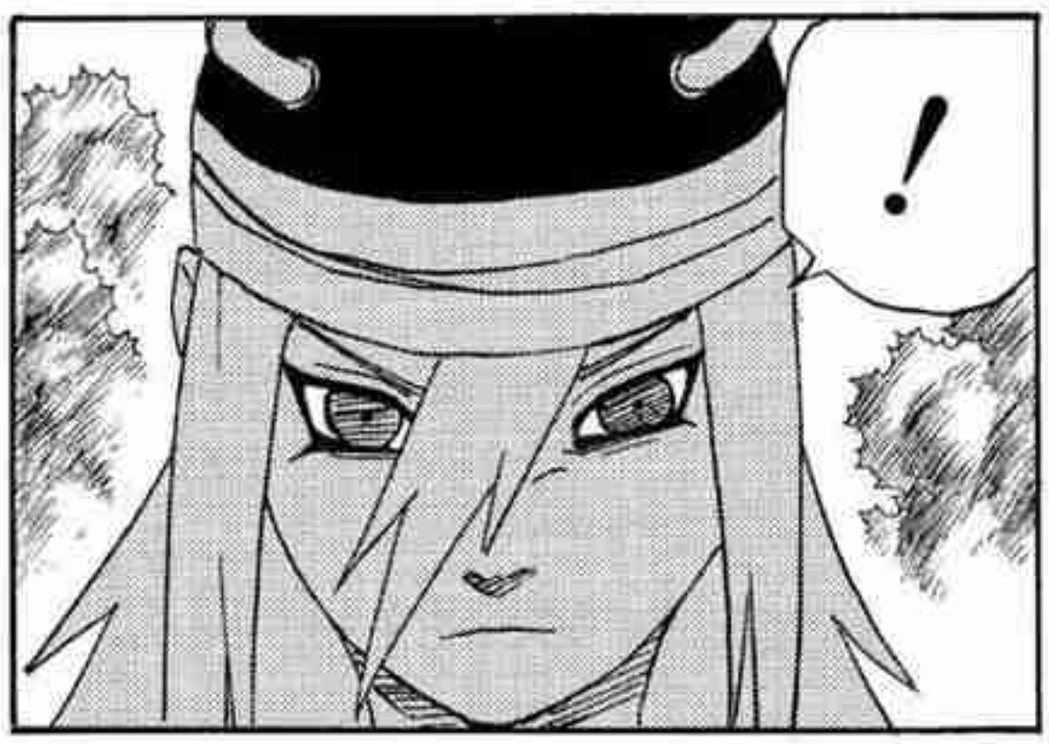
...

...
NOT EVEN ME.

I DON'T THINK THEY'RE DEAD...

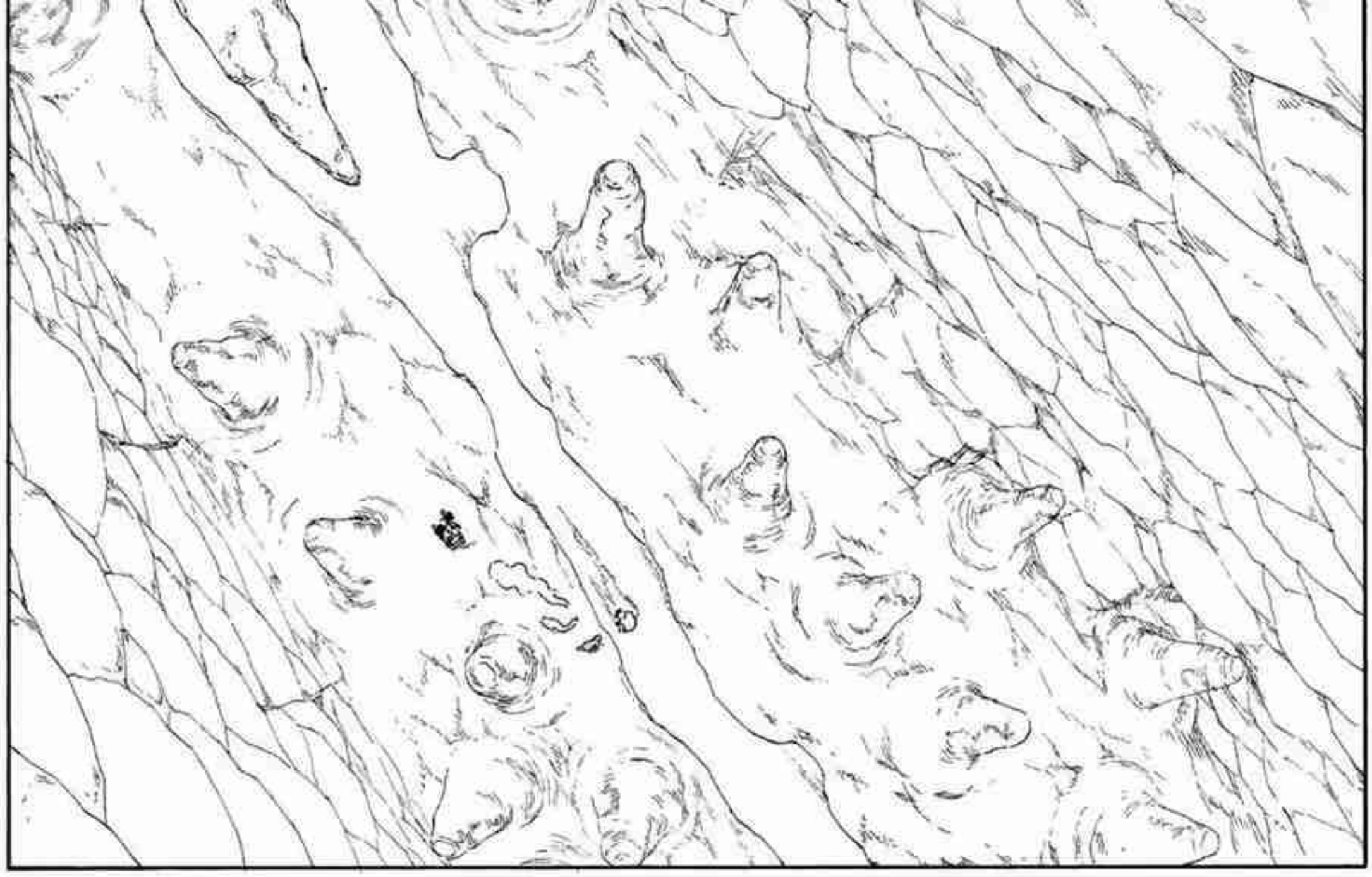
LISTEN UP...

...I DON'T THINK THEY'RE SACRIFICES.



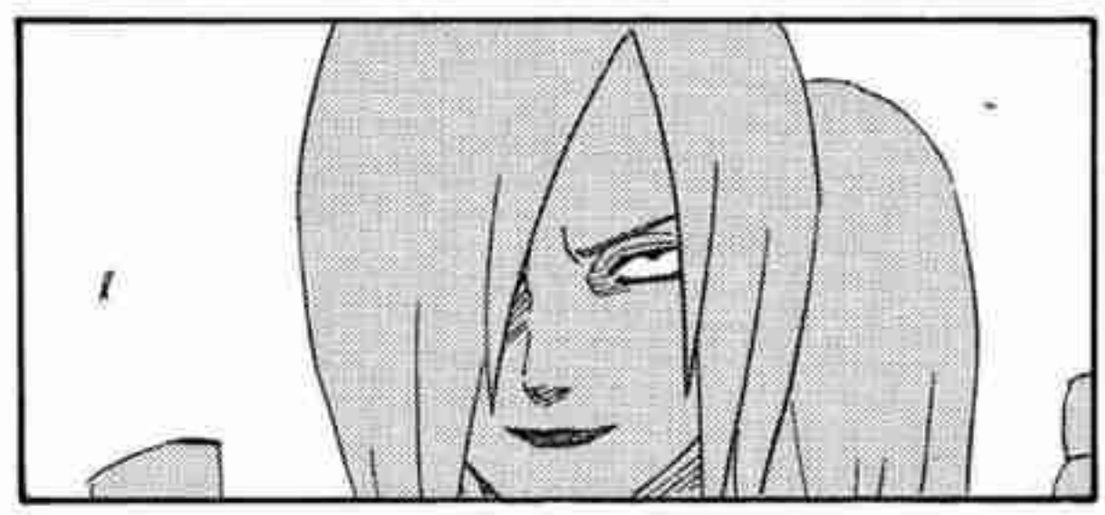
...IS BELIEVE IN THEM...

SPLASH
DON'T UNDER-ESTIMATE MY TEAM.
WHOAH!!
GRIN
GRABB
SLOOSH
WOOF WOOF!
?!



AND HOW DID HE COUNTER ?!
MY ATTACK WAS DEAD ON, BUT NO EFFECT ?!

HUH ...?
WHY?!

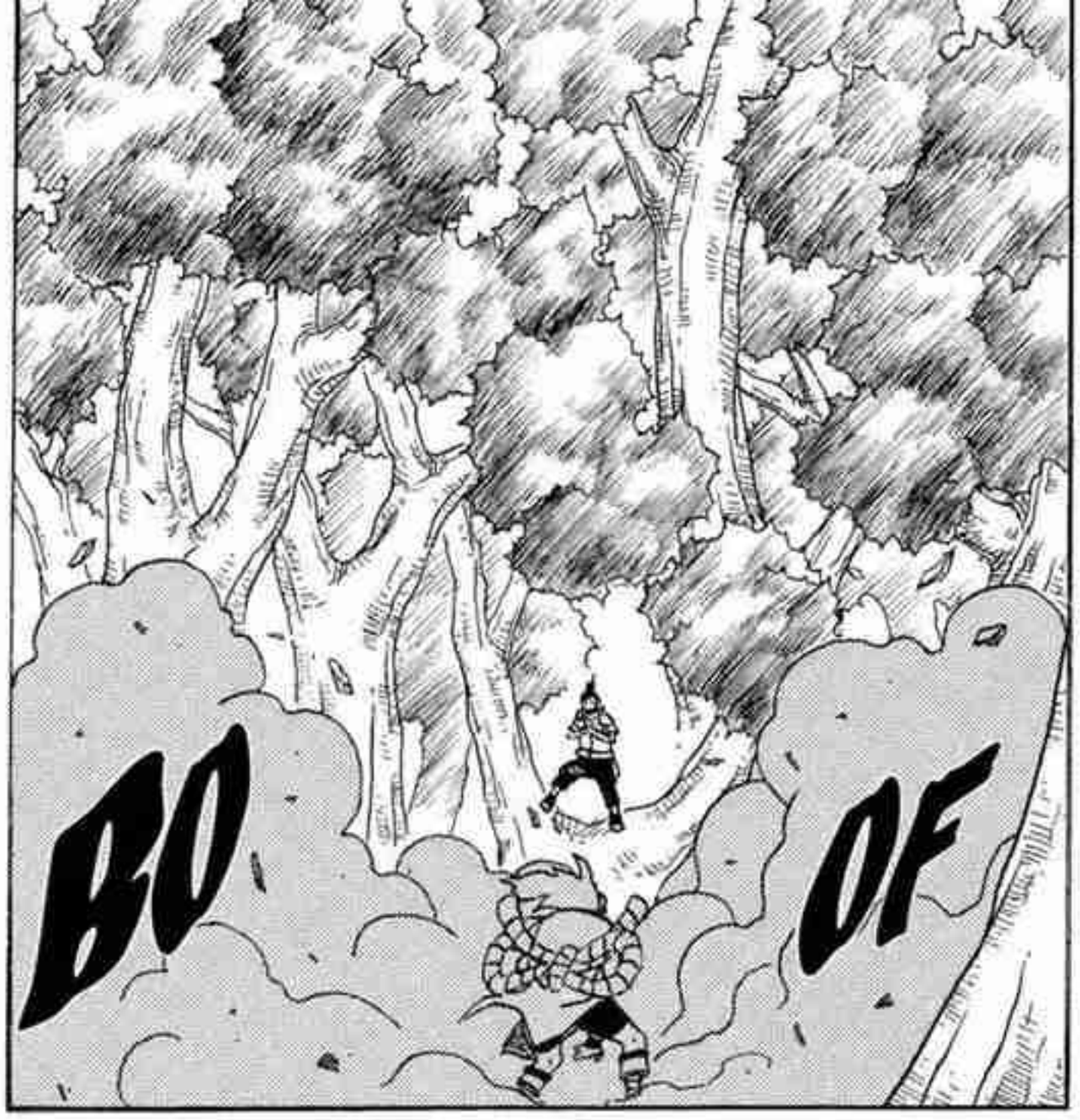


LISTEN, AKAMARU. WE'LL NAIL HIM WITH GATSUUGA...
ARF ...

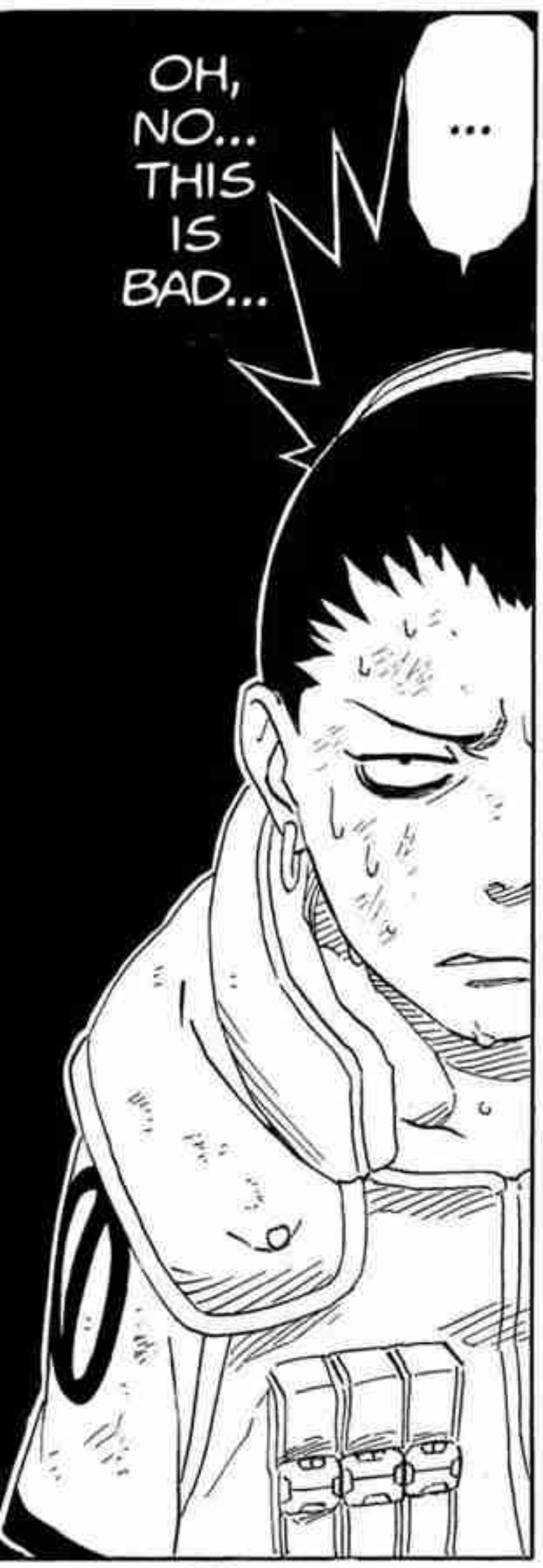
TSK...

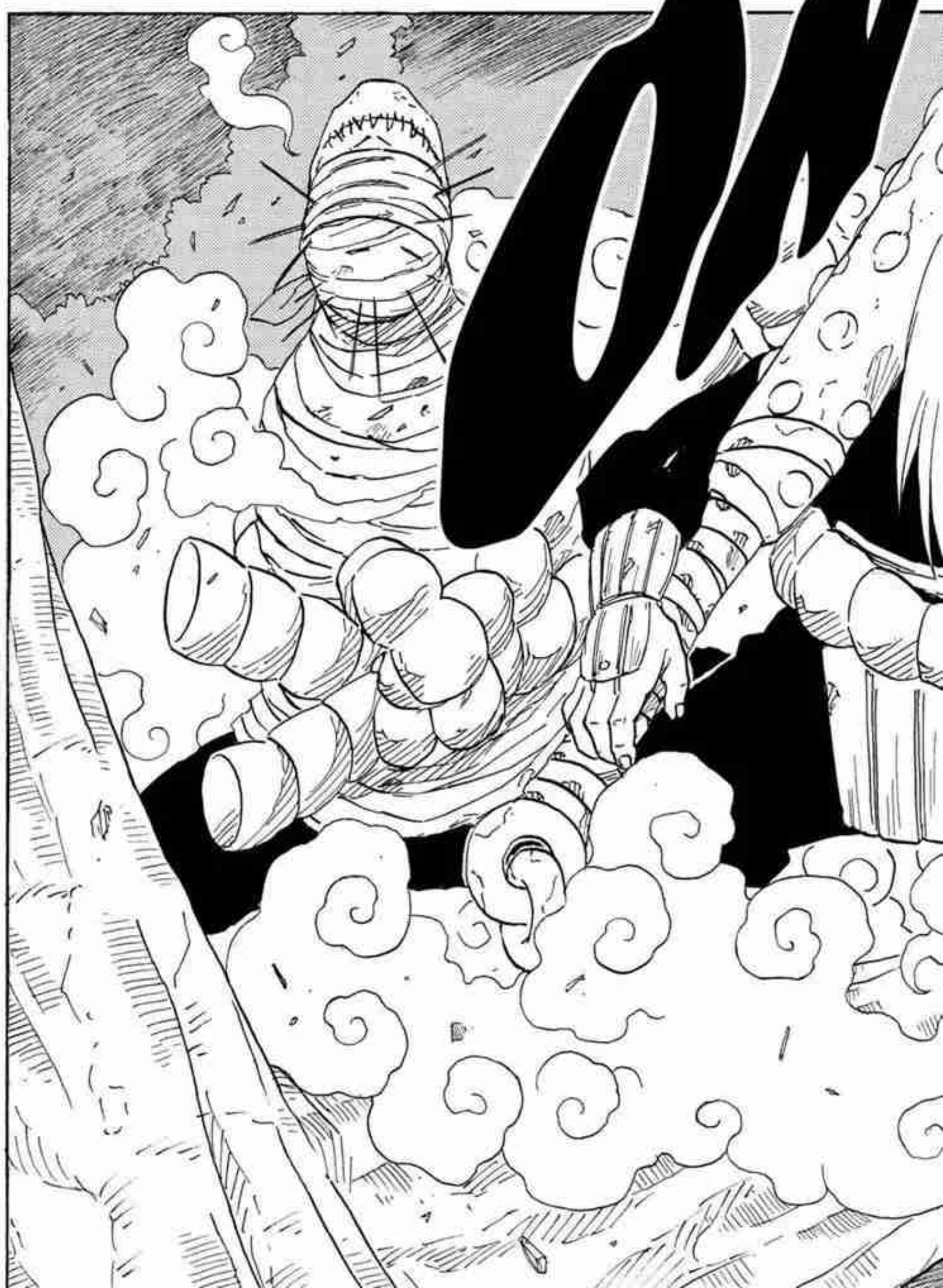
READ THIS WAY
FOOSH POOF
SPLASH
!
SPL OSH
GATSUUGA! FANG-OVER-FANG!!
WH
IRRRR

BO
OM
G


BO
OF

KUCHI-YOSE NO JUTSU! THE ART OF SUMMON-ING!!
BA


OH, NO... THIS IS BAD...
...

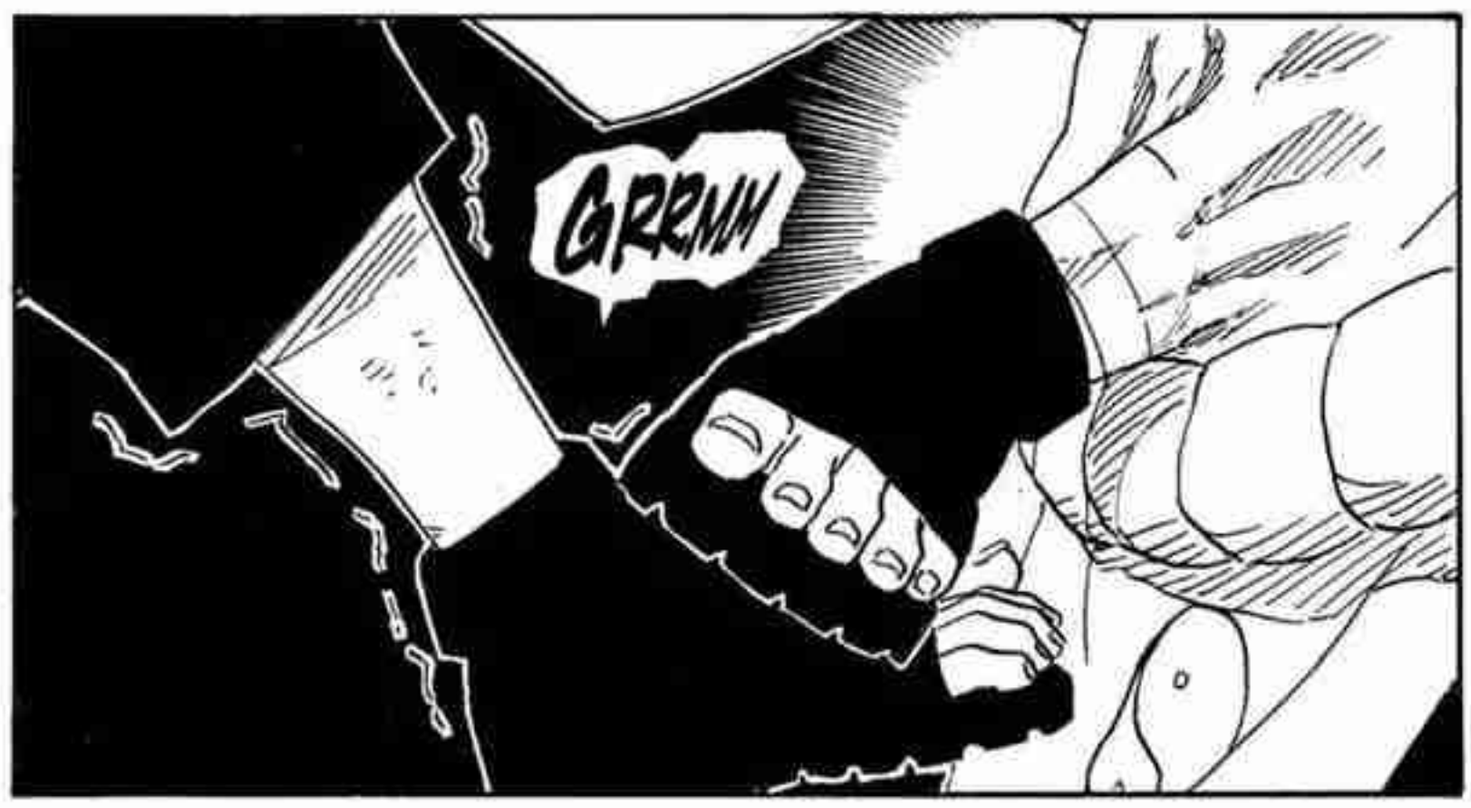


IT'S YOU...

I'M GONNA PLAY A MELODY OF DEATH FOR YOU!

...WHO SHOULDN'T UNDER-ESTIMATE US!

TH
AK
WHAT IS THIS GUY?!


GRRNN

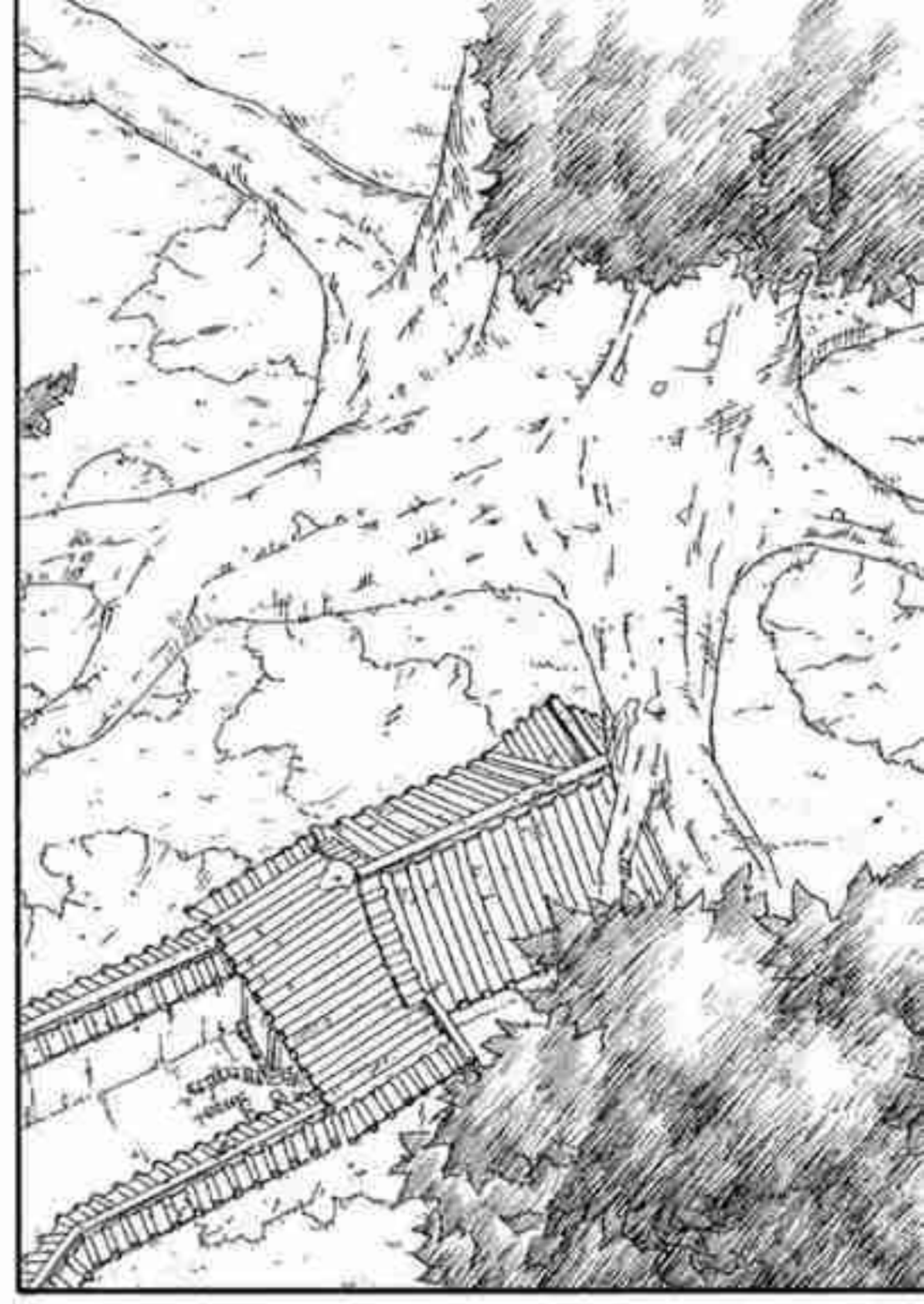
?!

RIGHT... SAKON?
TWO ON TWO. WORKS FOR ME.

THEY MIGHT'VE SENT PEOPLE CAPABLE OF STOPPING THEM.

OR MAYBE THEY'RE PLAYING AROUND...

BUT... WHO WOULD'VE THOUGHT THE SOUND FOUR WOULD TAKE SO LONG...



...THE PLAYFUL KIDOMARU.

WELL, THE ONE WHO'S SLOWING THEM DOWN IS EITHER THE PERPETUALLY HUNGRY JIROBO OR...

HO HO...

TAYUYA IS NO LESS VAIN.

HO HO... WELL...

HE'S NOT SATISFIED UNTIL HE KILLS HIS FOE. HE COULD JUST LEAVE THEM, BUT...

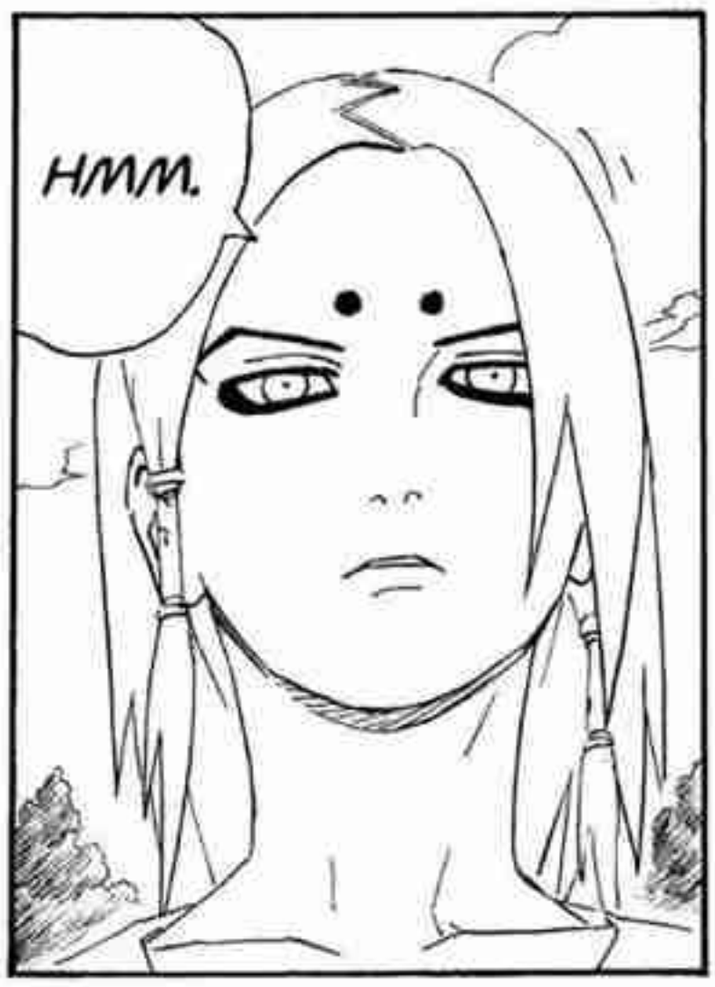
HE'S THE STRONGEST OF THE SOUND FOUR. HE LIKES TO SHOW OFF.

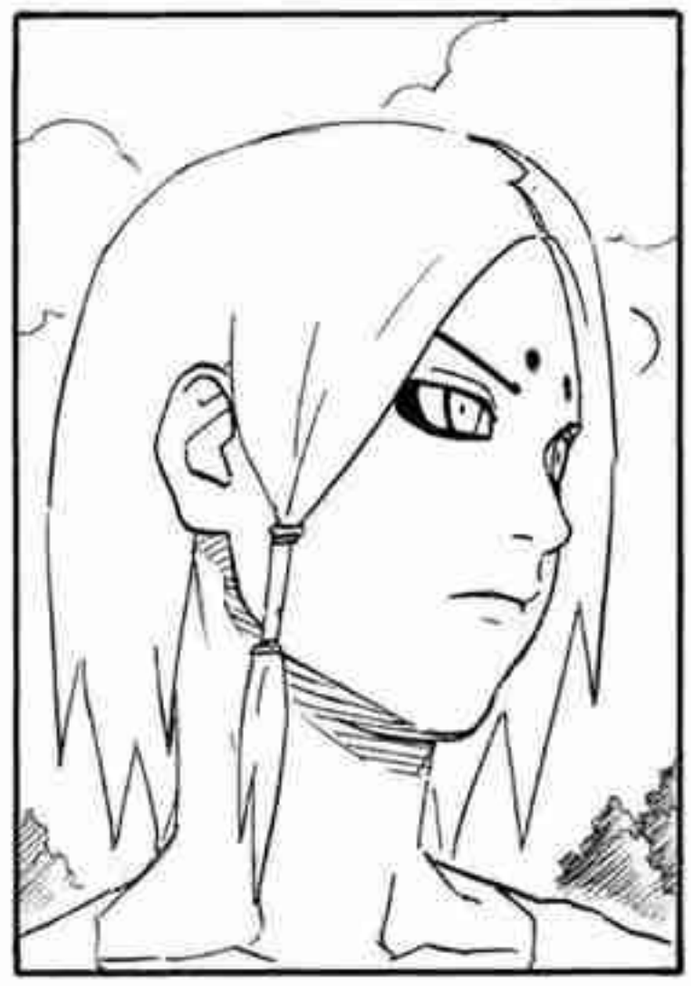
HEH HEH... BUT SAKON'S THE MOST TROUBLE-SOME.

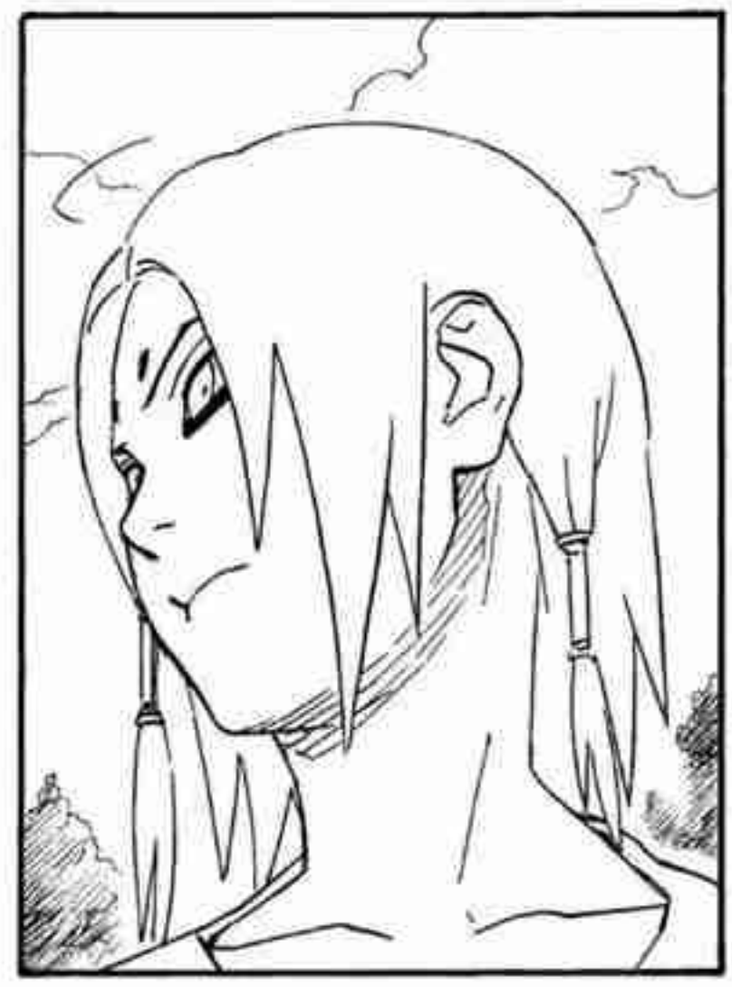
READ
THIS
WAY

HE'LL CLEAN UP WHOEVER'S BECOME USELESS TO ME...
WELL... IN ANY CASE, NOW THAT KIMIMARO'S THERE, WE WON'T FAIL...

...

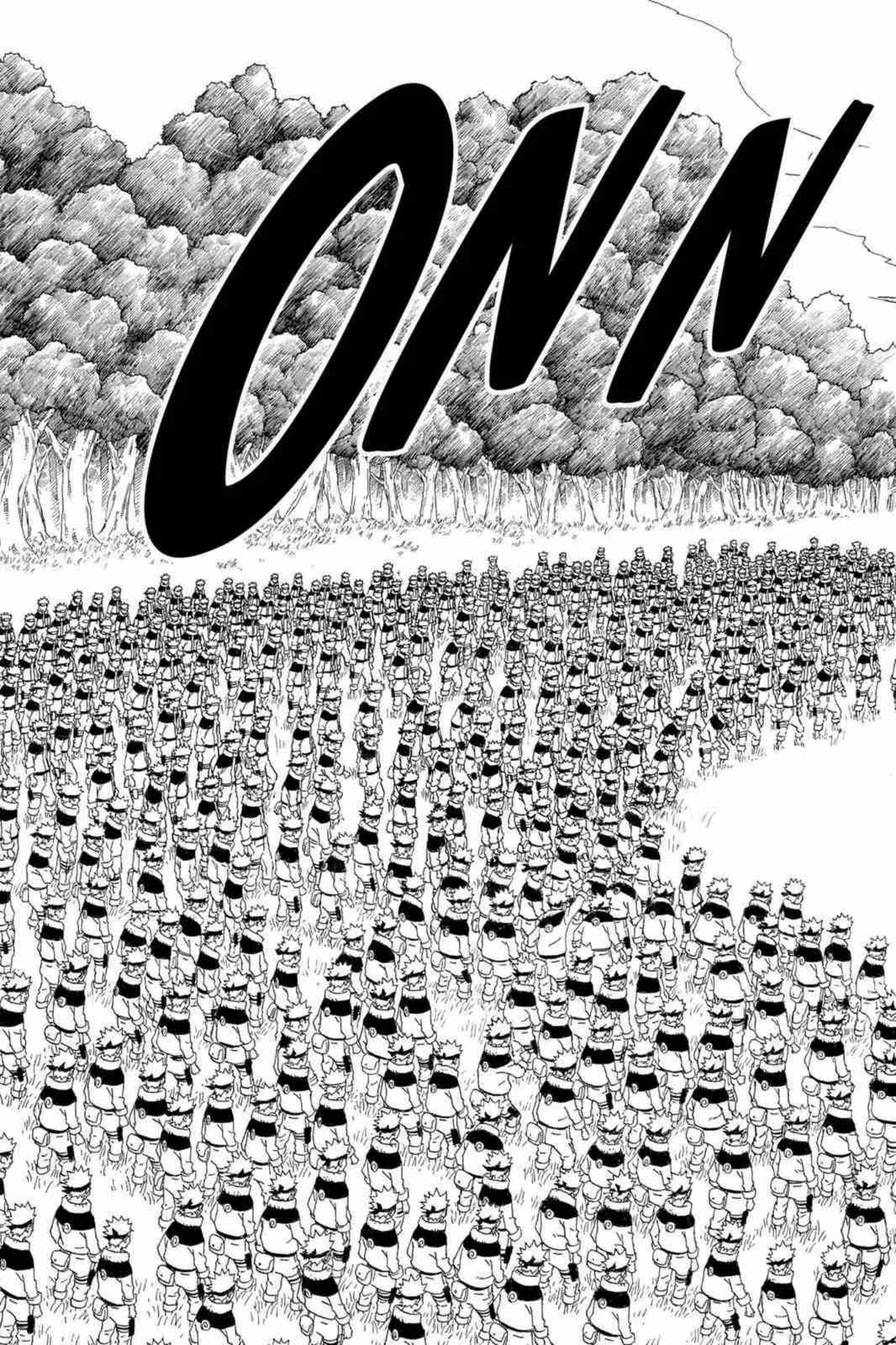

HMM.





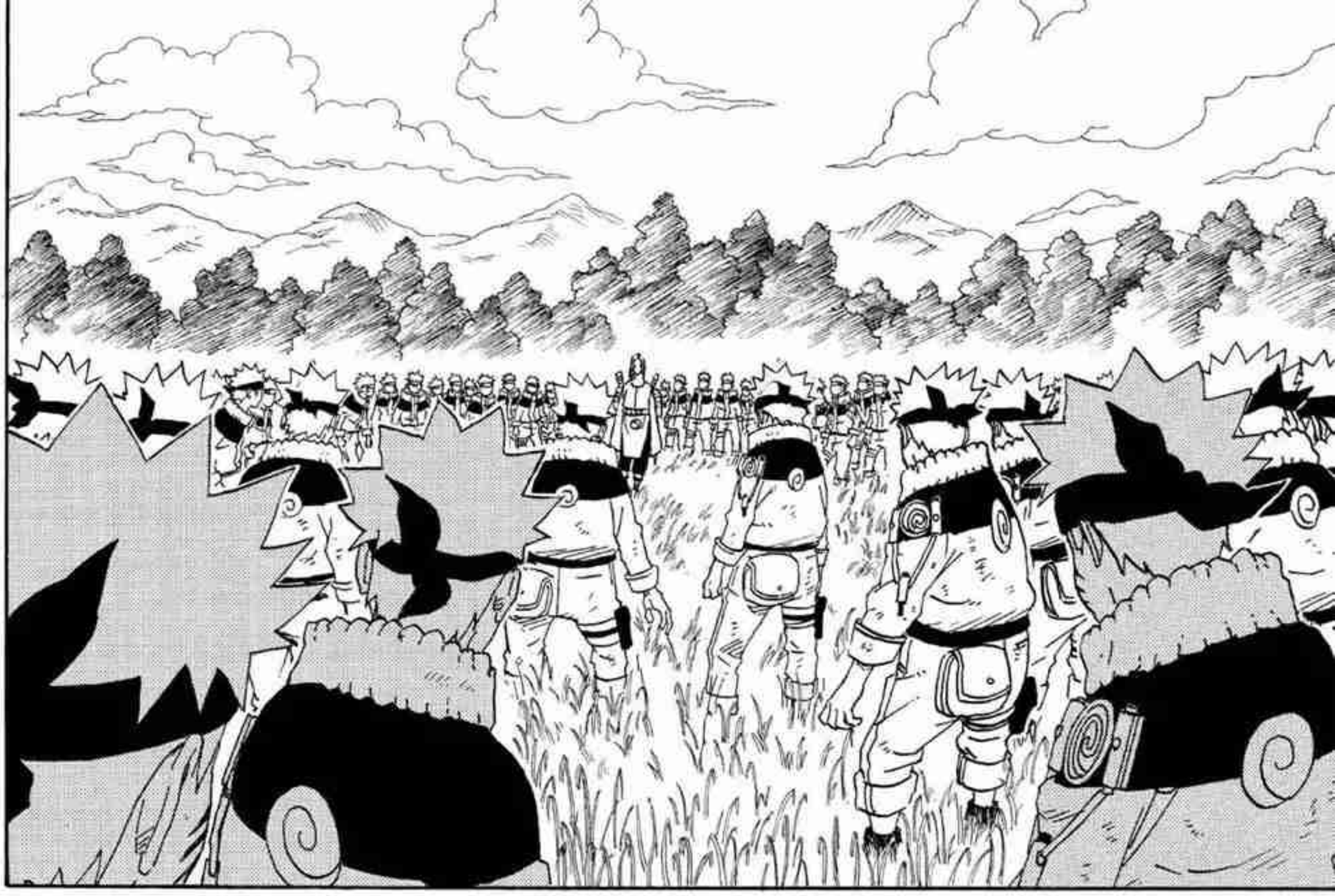
I WON'T GIVE UP ON SASUKE, NO MATTER WHAT...

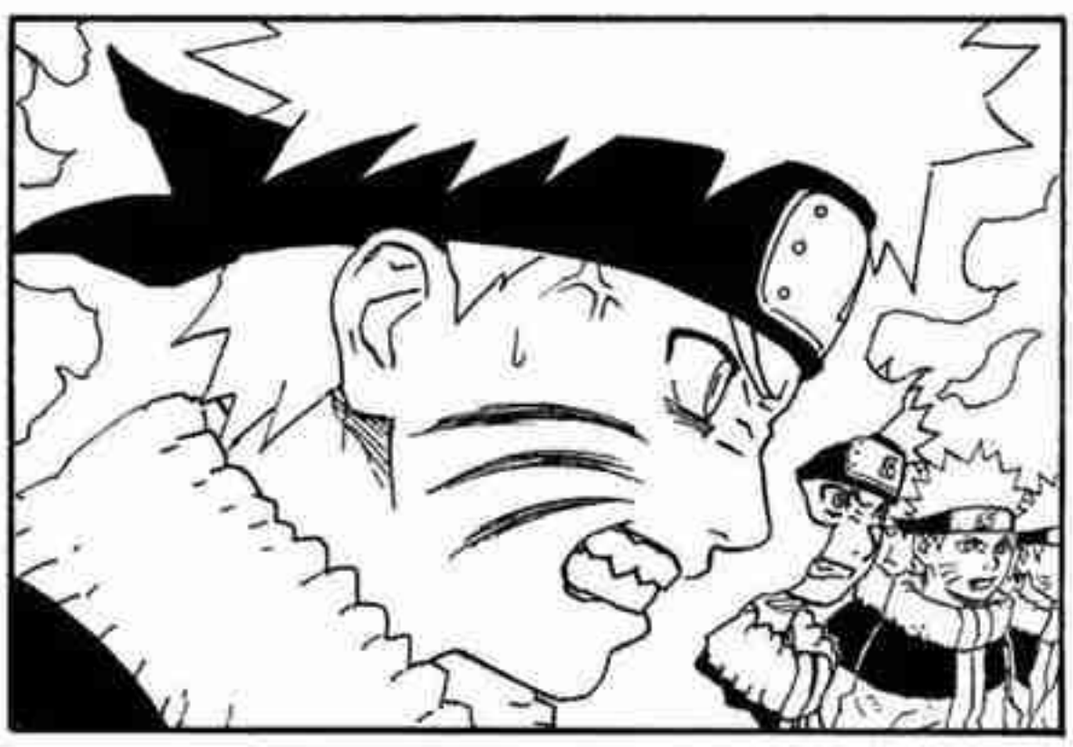
NW
INTERESTING.

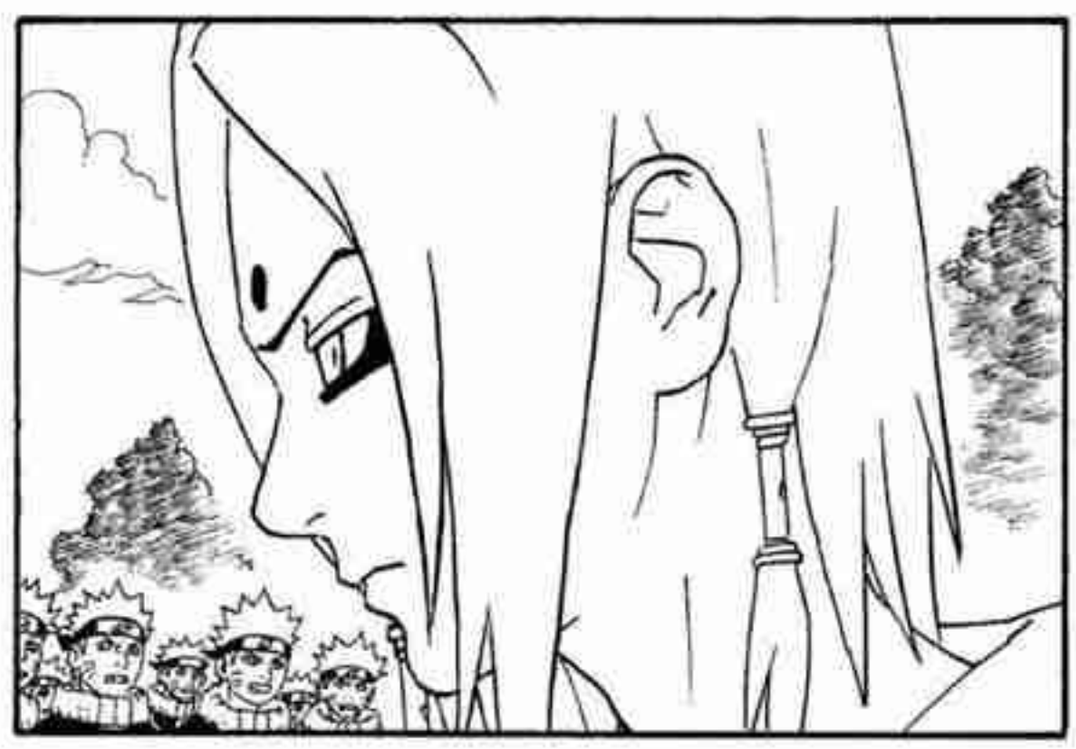

OMIN

NARUTO
TM

Number 203: Sakon's Secret







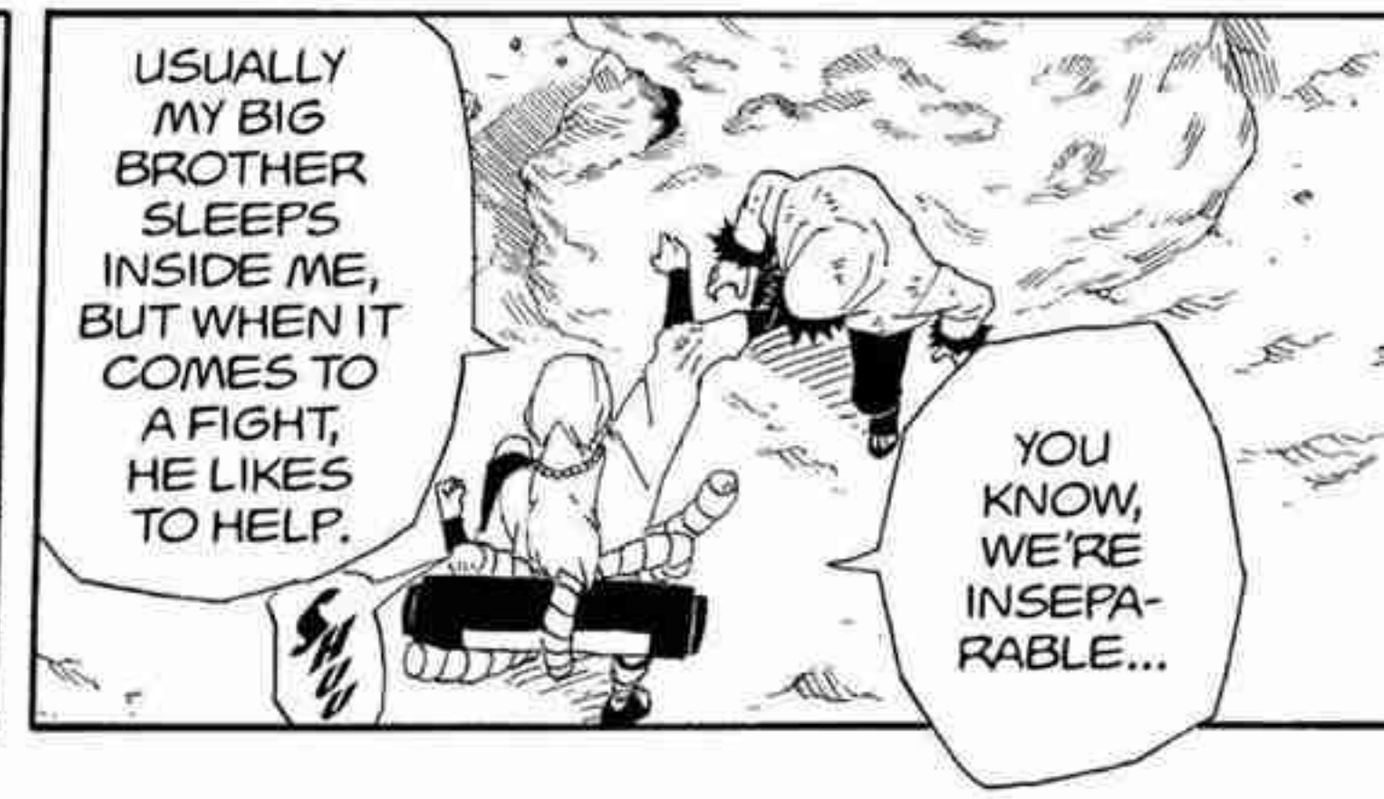
GRR
YOU'RE SO OVER!

COME TO ME.
FFMM

GRRR
GRRRRRRRR
FOOSH

TARENKEN! MULTIPLE FISTS BARRAGE!!
SHI
ASH
!
HMPH...
NGH.
!

GRAB



SHUU

SHUU

READ THIS WAY
WOOF! WOOF!
LIKE THIS!
THUK
AGH!!
SHU
AAUGH!!
WHIMPER!
A TRIPLE KICK! FEEL THE POWER? NOW...
FWUP
TAREN-KYAKU! MULTIPLE LEGS BARRAGE!!
!
THERE'S NO TIME FOR GAMES, SAKON.
SHU
SHU
WHUP

THEY ALL DIE NOW!
ACTIVATE SECOND STATE!!
SHUU

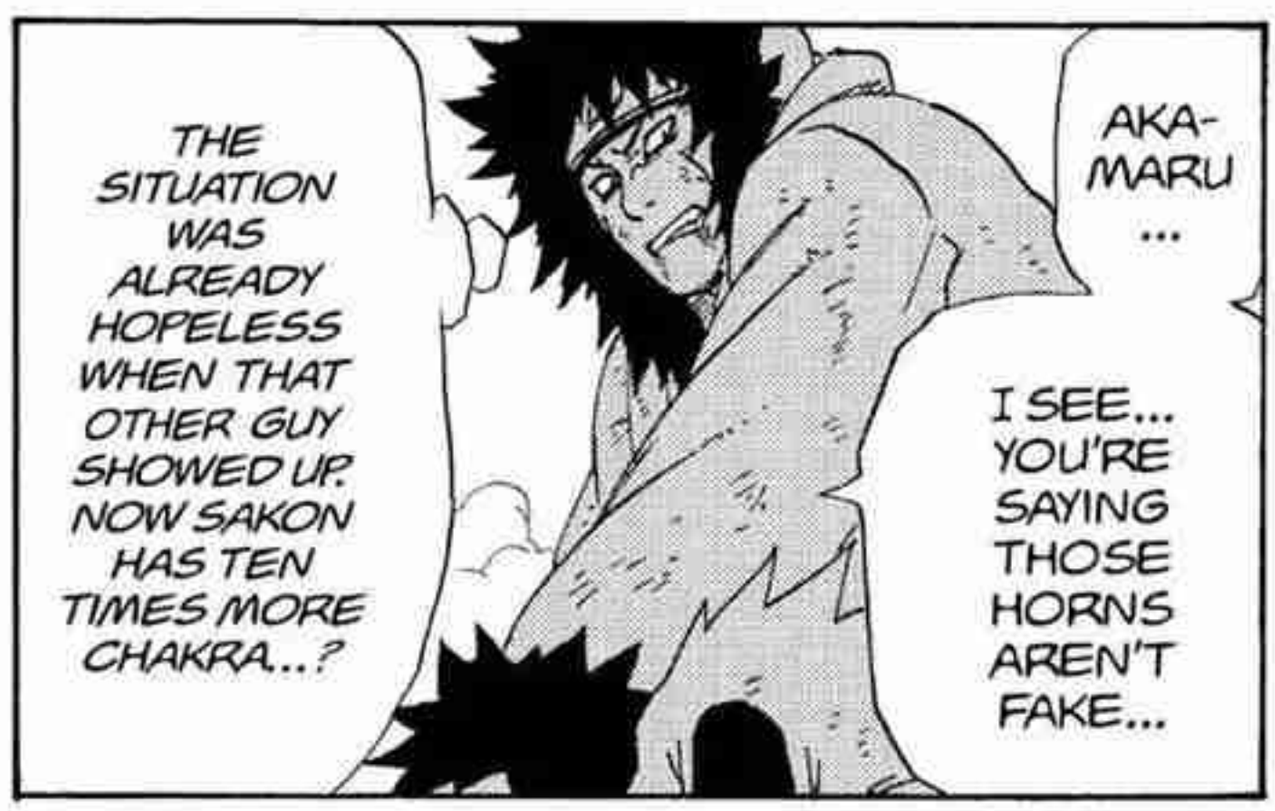
READ
THIS
WAY

YOU'RE IMPETUOUS, BIG BROTHER.
SHUU

?!!

SHIVR SHIVR
WHIMPER.

HUF
HUF

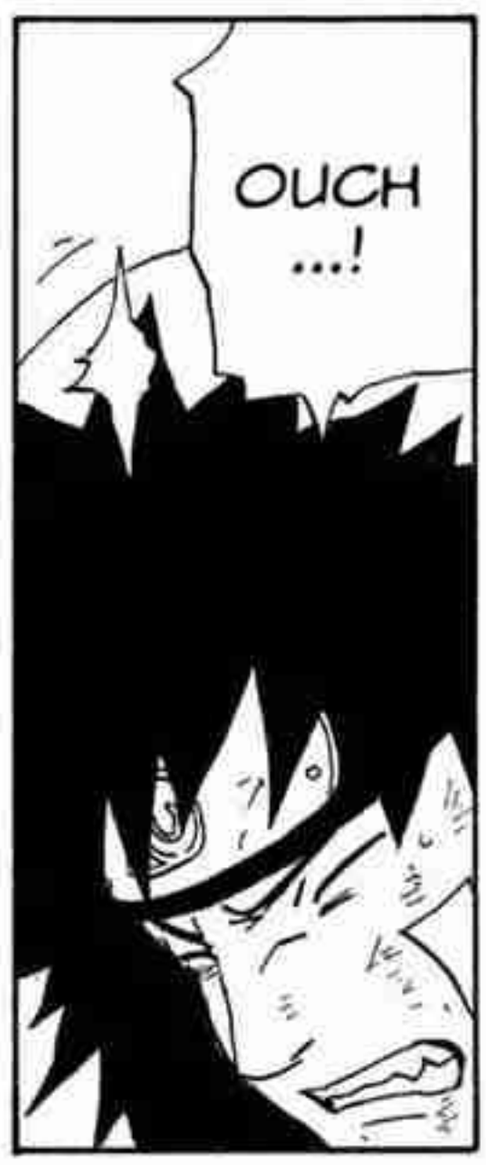

THE SITUATION WAS ALREADY HOPELESS WHEN THAT OTHER GUY SHOWED UP. NOW SAKON HAS TEN TIMES MORE CHAKRA...?
AKA-MARU ...
I SEE... YOU'RE SAYING THOSE HORNS AREN'T FAKE...

IN PIECES...
HOW DO YOU WANT THEM, BIG BROTHER?

YOU WANNA DO THAT?!
!!

WOOF WOOF!!

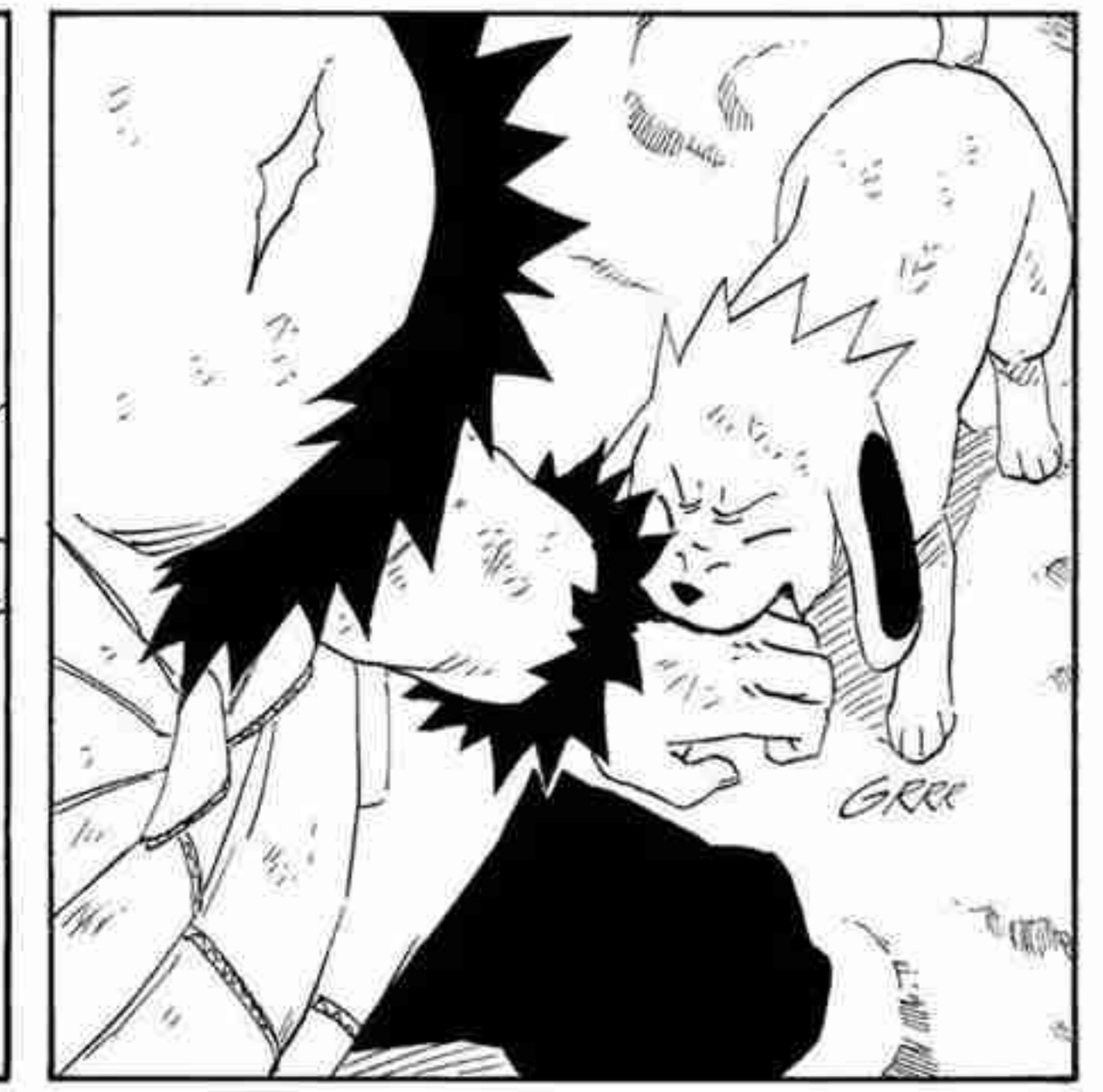
NO WAY, AKAMARU!
IT'S TOO DANGEROUS WITHOUT OUR COMRADES.
ARF!


OUCH ...!

WE'LL DIE HERE...
IF WE MESS UP...

YOU KNOW IF WE USE THAT JUTSU, BOTH OF US...
...OUR CHAKRA WILL RUN OUT AND WE WON'T BE ABLE TO MOVE ANYMORE.

AKA-MARU...
...


GRRR

TAP
TAK
WOOF! WOOF!

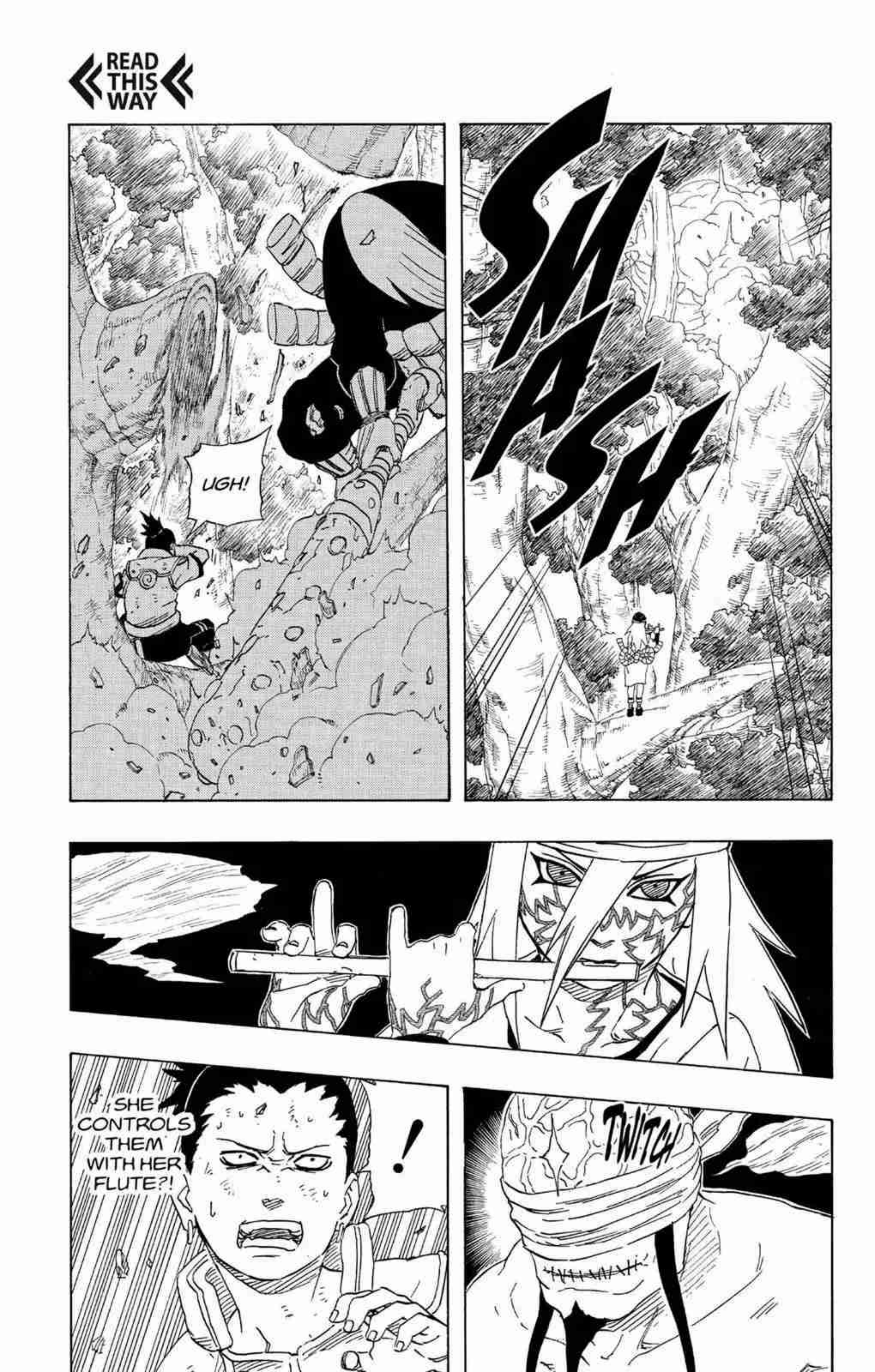
AKAMARU... YOU'RE RIGHT. IT'S THE ONLY WAY...
HMPH... YOU BIT ME... I'M A PATHETIC MASTER.

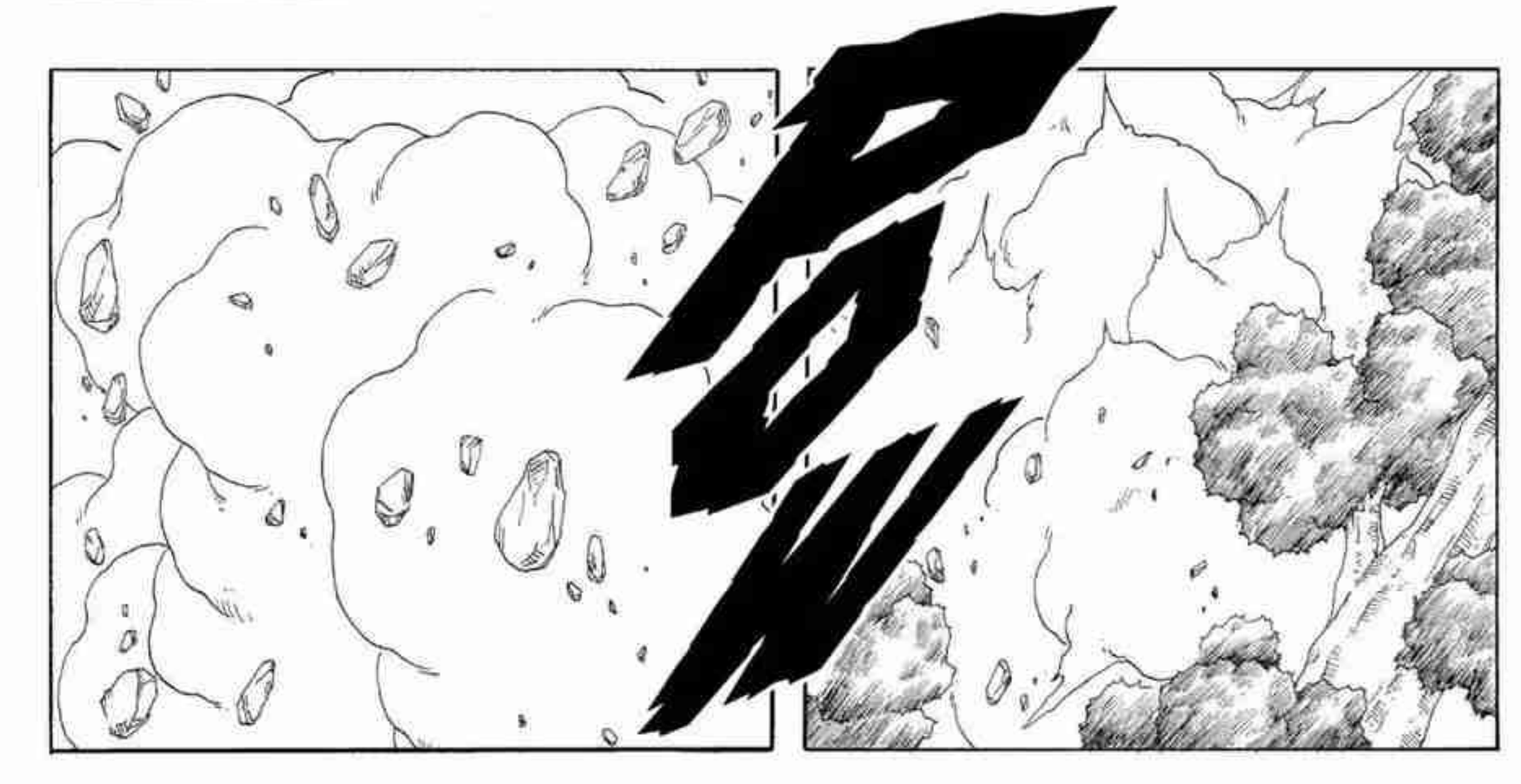
...

GAROGA! WOLF FANG-OVER-FANG!

SKF

ARF!!


READ THIS WAY
UGH!
SHE CONTROLS THEM WITH HER FLUTE?!
!
TWITCH



SPRAA Y
ARF!
DYNAMIC MARKING!!

AKA-MARU, NOW!
GRAB

!!
NOW WE'RE READY!
TAP
TAP

WHA... DID HE JUST ...?!
ZAP
TAK
?!

BO OF

INUZUKA STYLE! MAN-BEAST TRANSFOR-MATION COMBO!!
THUMP
FWUP

ONH

GRR

HG

SOTORO! TWO-HEADED WOLF!!

DRIP DRIP

BAM
!

HE-HEH HEH. AS IF IT MATTERED.
WHAT CAN A COUPLE OF DRIVELING DOGS DO...?

SWIP
EAT THIS!!

!

ARGH!
THU
BWAFF
GAROGA!
WOLF
FANG-
OVER-
FANG!!

?!!
*@&%...

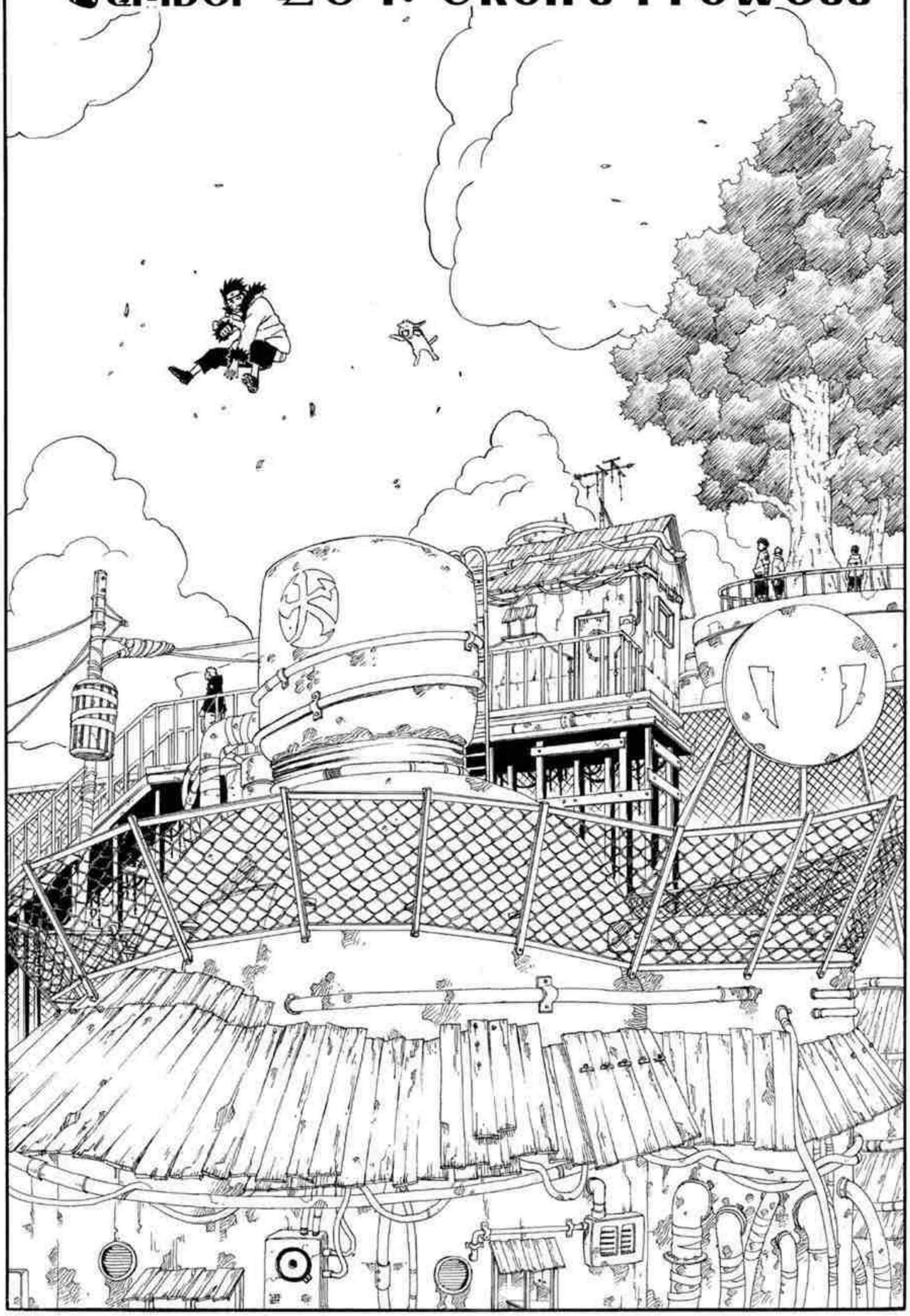
SAKON, WHAT'RE YOU DOING? ON THE RIGHT!!
DROOL ?!

!
SLIP

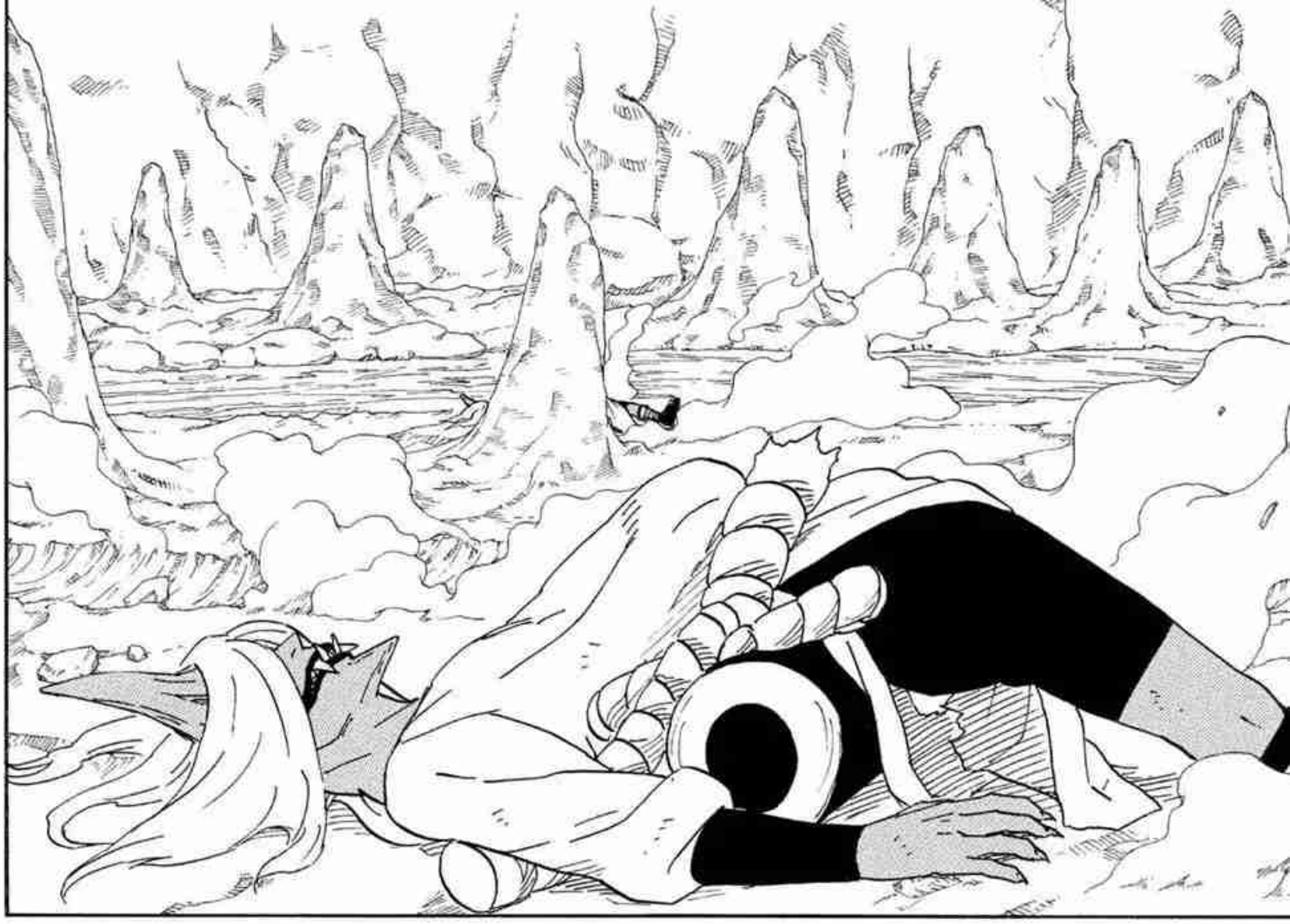
THUD

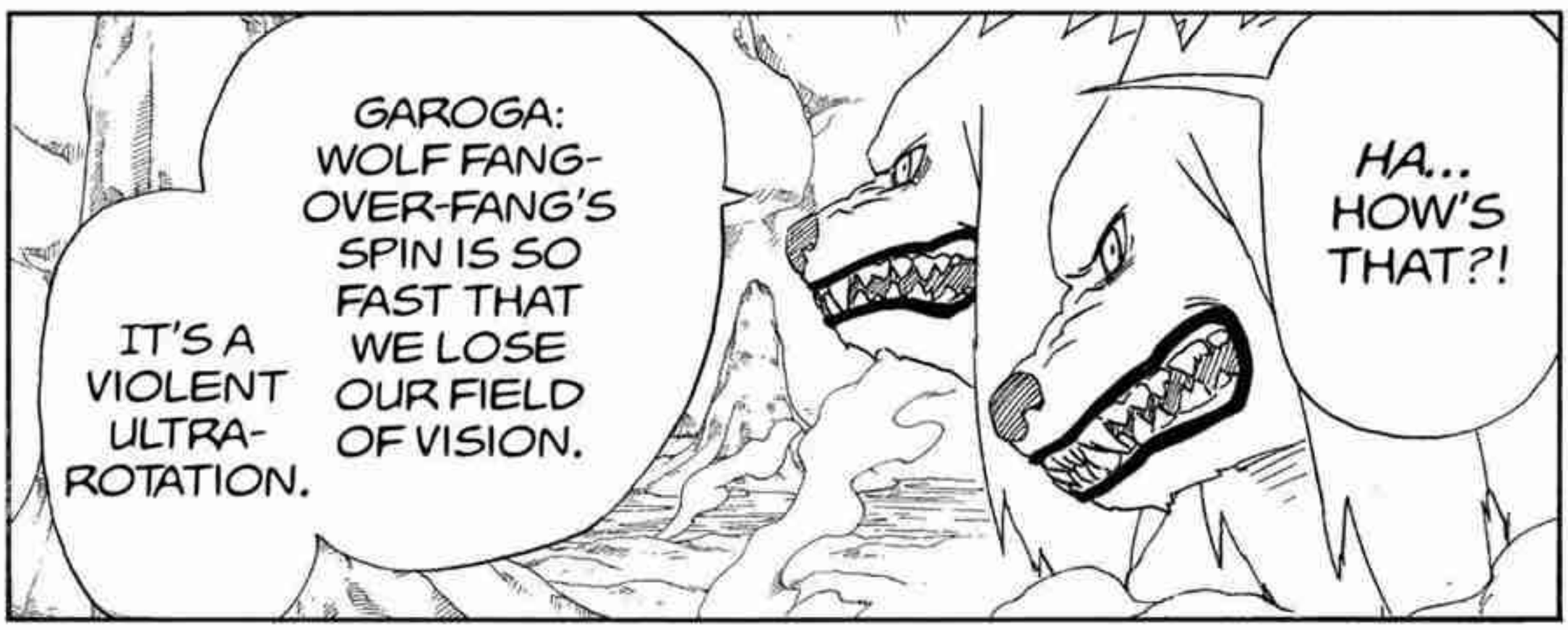
NARUTO
TM

Number 204: Ukon's Prowess



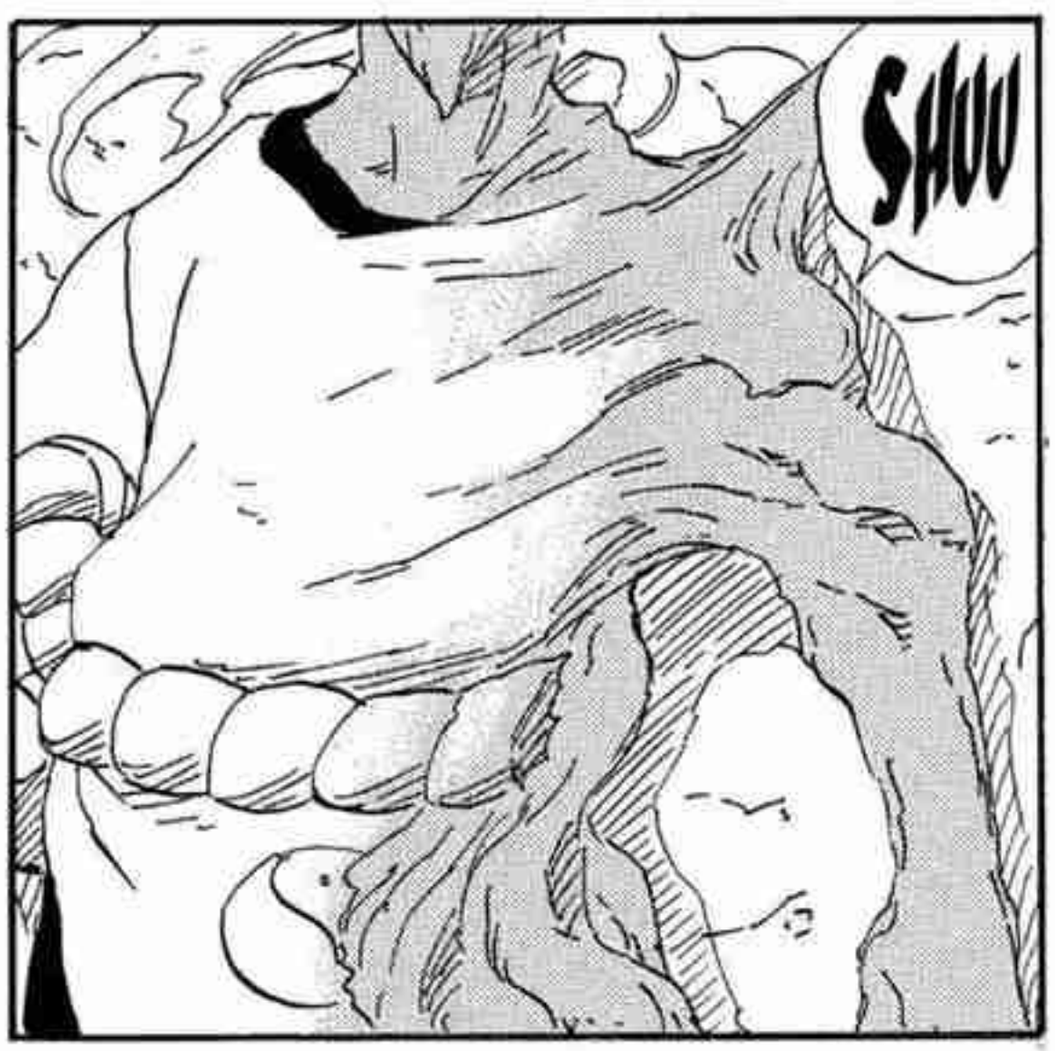
READ THIS WAY
SHREDDD
THUD
THUD

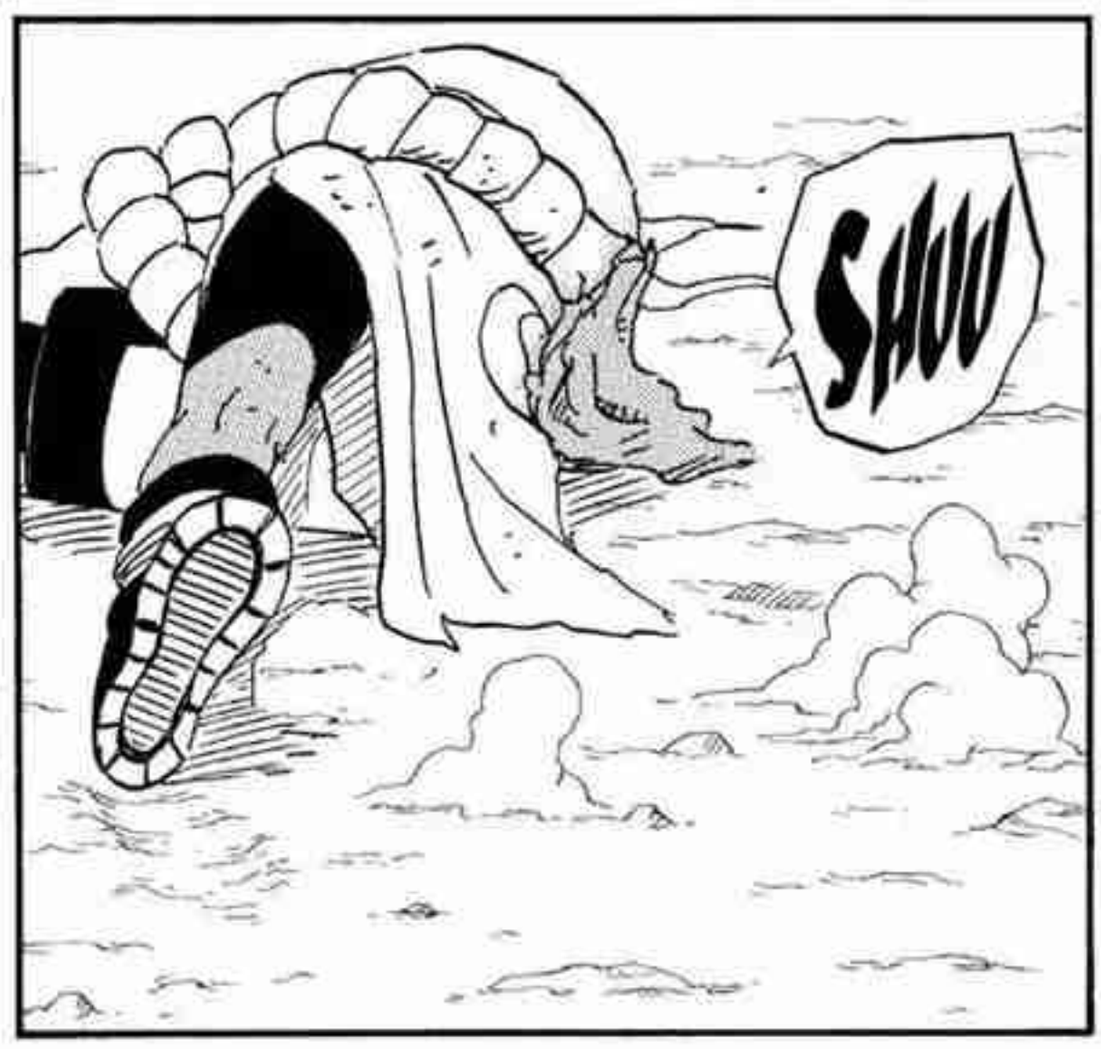



IT'S A VIOLENT ULTRA-ROTATION.
GAROGA: WOLF FANG-OVER-FANG'S SPIN IS SO FAST THAT WE LOSE OUR FIELD OF VISION.
HA... HOW'S THAT?!

IF YOU TAKE IT FULL BLAST, YOU GET SMASHED.
EVEN IF IT'S NOT A DIRECT HIT, YOU'RE STILL CUT DOWN...

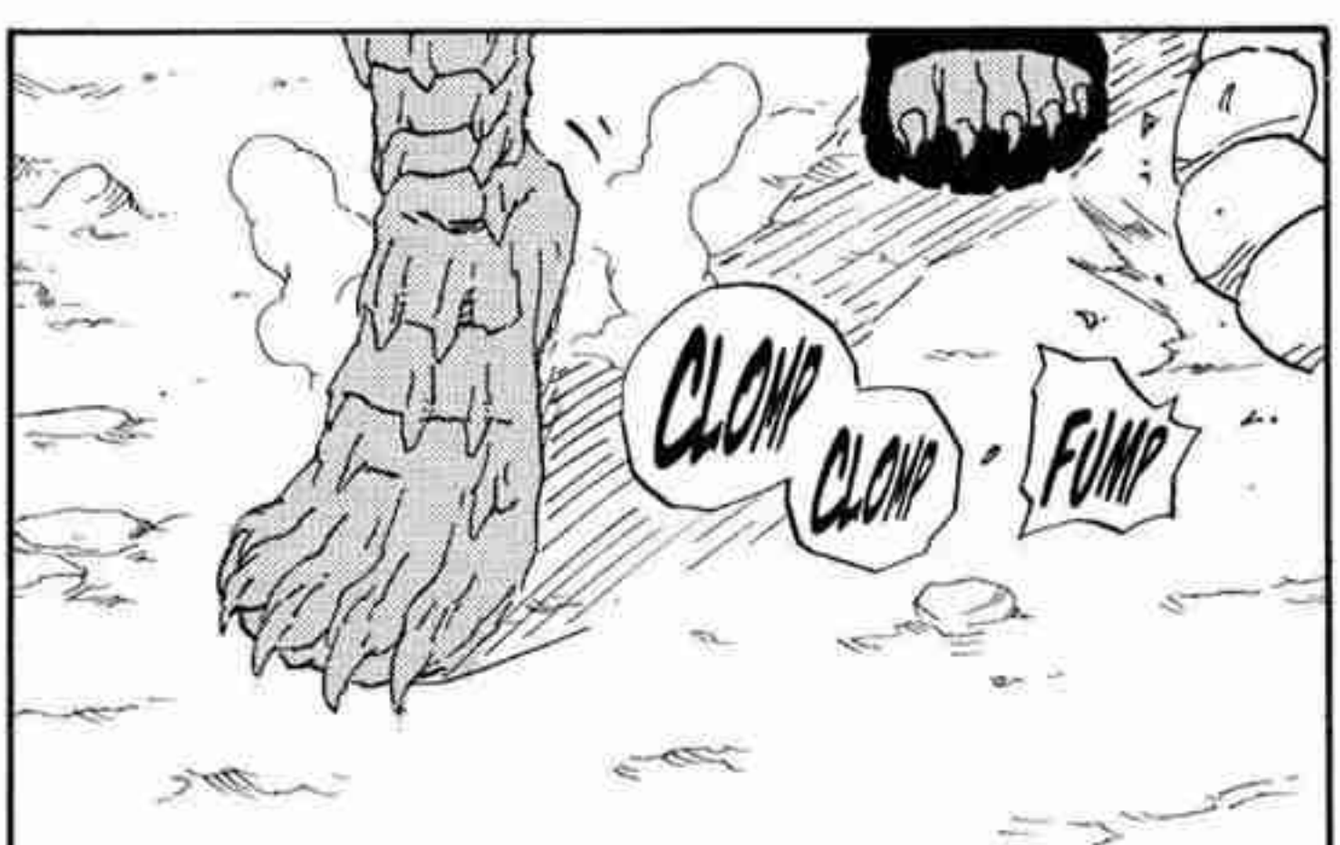
READ THIS WAY
?!
?!


SHUU


SHUU

SHUU

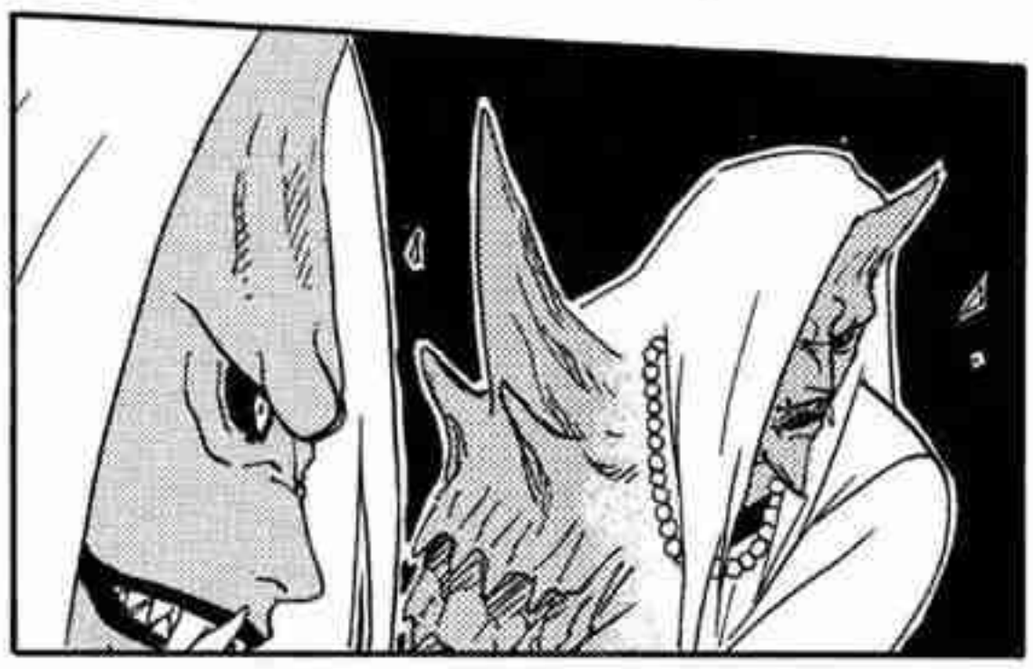
?!!

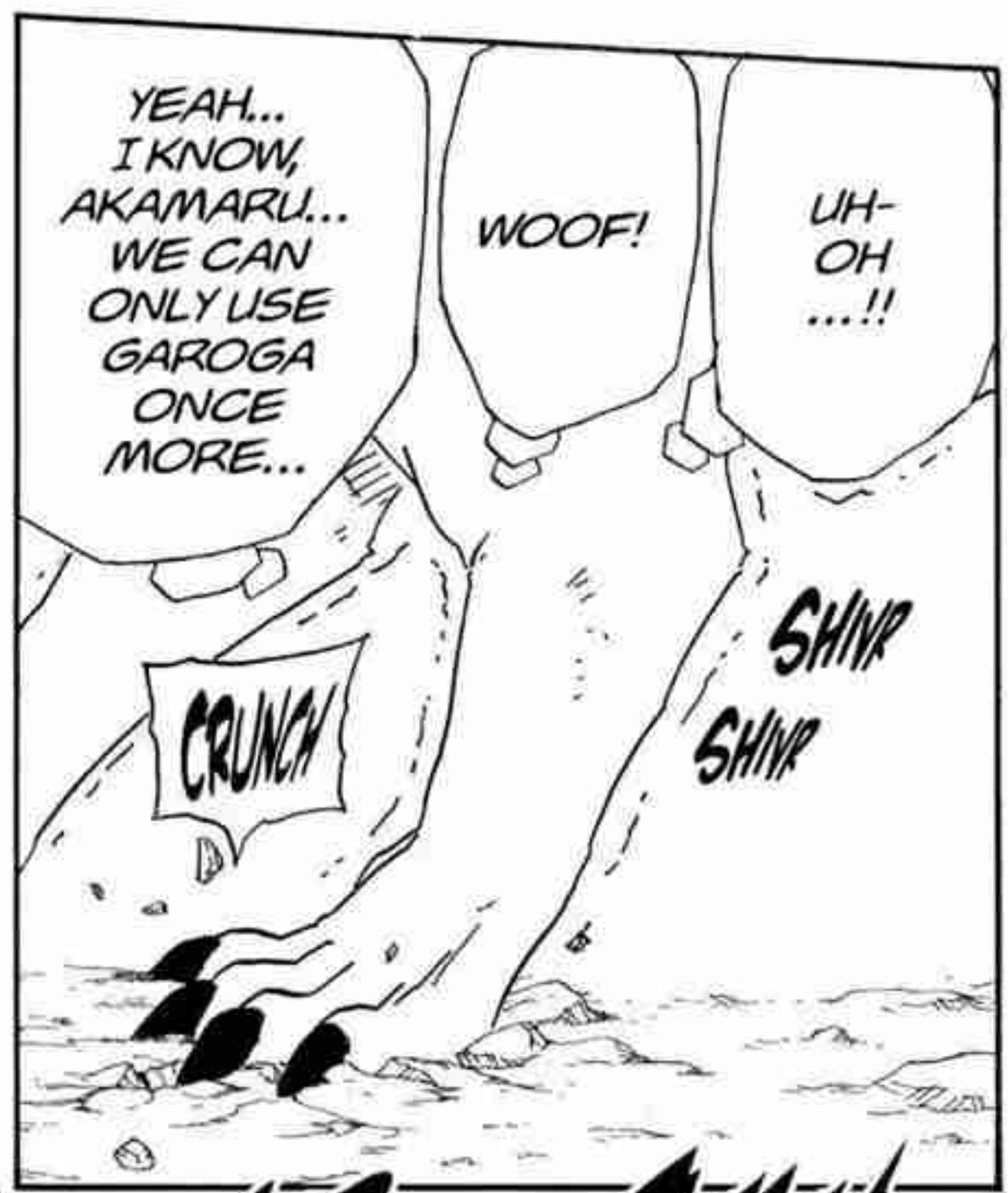

CLOMP
CLOMP
FUMP

WHATEVER... WE WERE JUST THINKING ABOUT SPLITTING UP TO FINISH YOU OFF.

CLOMP

NOW THE REAL FIGHT BEGINS.





WHIPPPPPPPP

FSSH

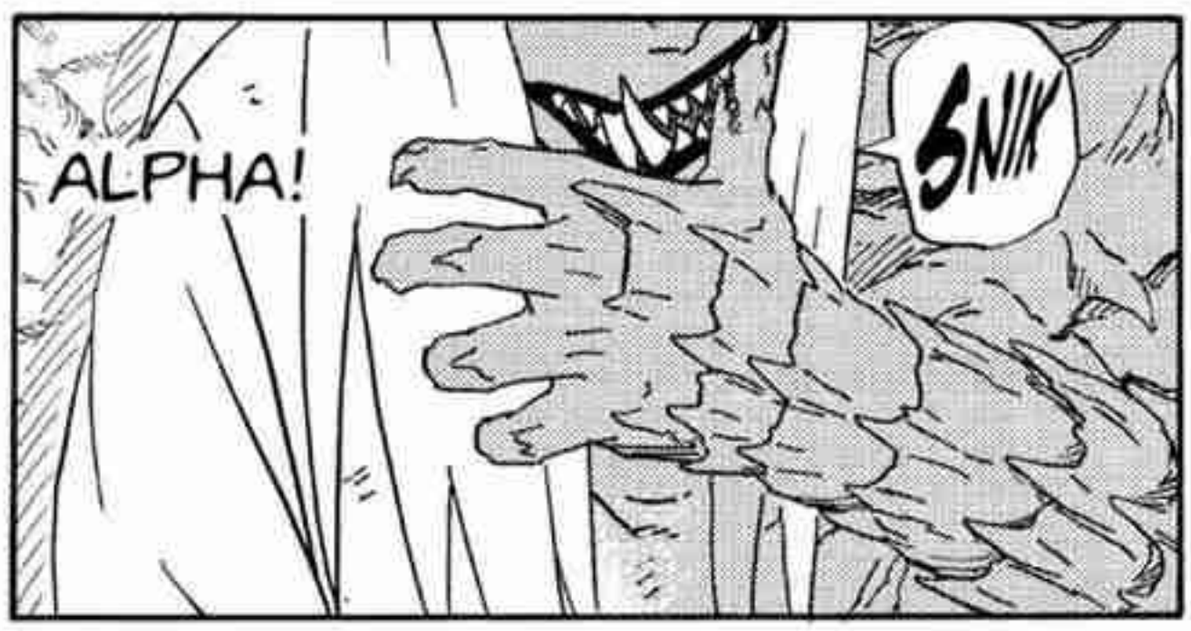
FSSH

SWIP

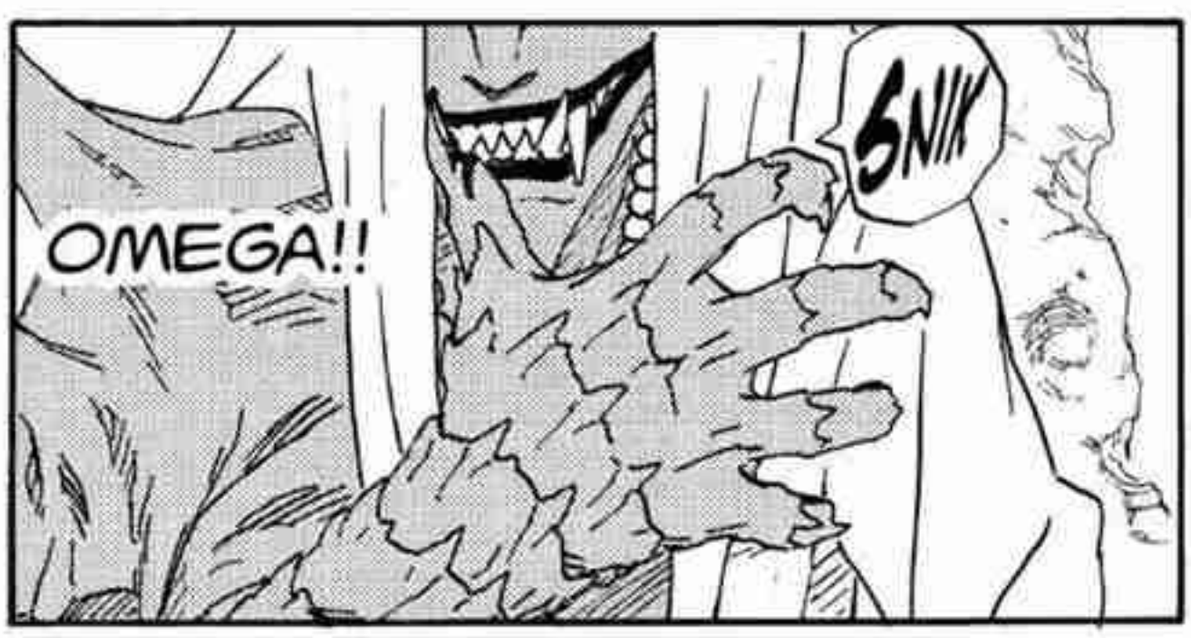
I TOLD YOU, WE'RE NOT FOLLOW-ING YOU WITH OUR EYES!

NO USE HIDING!!

DRAAY
ZAP
TAV
WE'RE FOLLOWING OUR NOSES...
AND ATTACKING BY TRACKING YOUR SCENT EVER SINCE WE MARKED YOU.


ALPHA!
SNIK

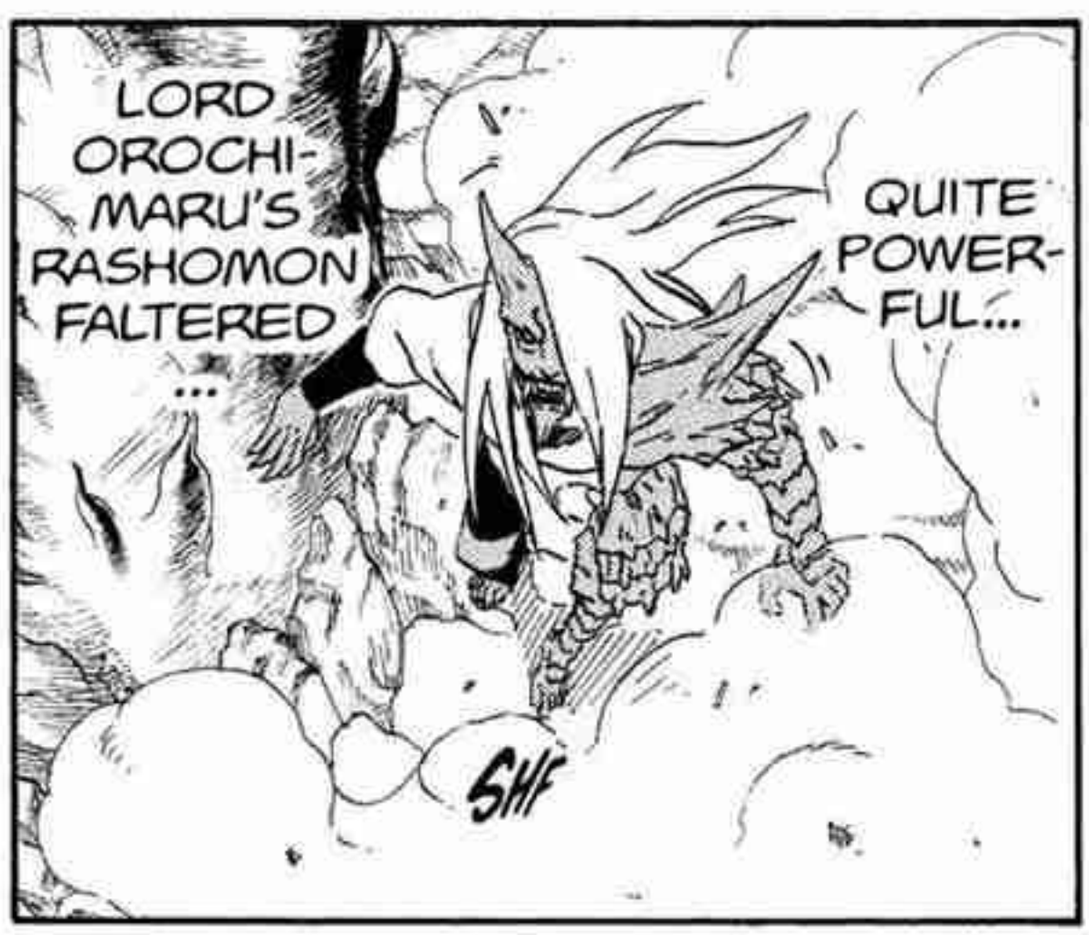
HRRR


OMEGA!!
SNIK

BAM
SUMMON...
BAM

RASHOMON!!!

!!


LORD OROCHI-MARU'S RASHOMON FALTERED ...
QUITE POWER-FUL...
SHF

...
WHOMP

TAK

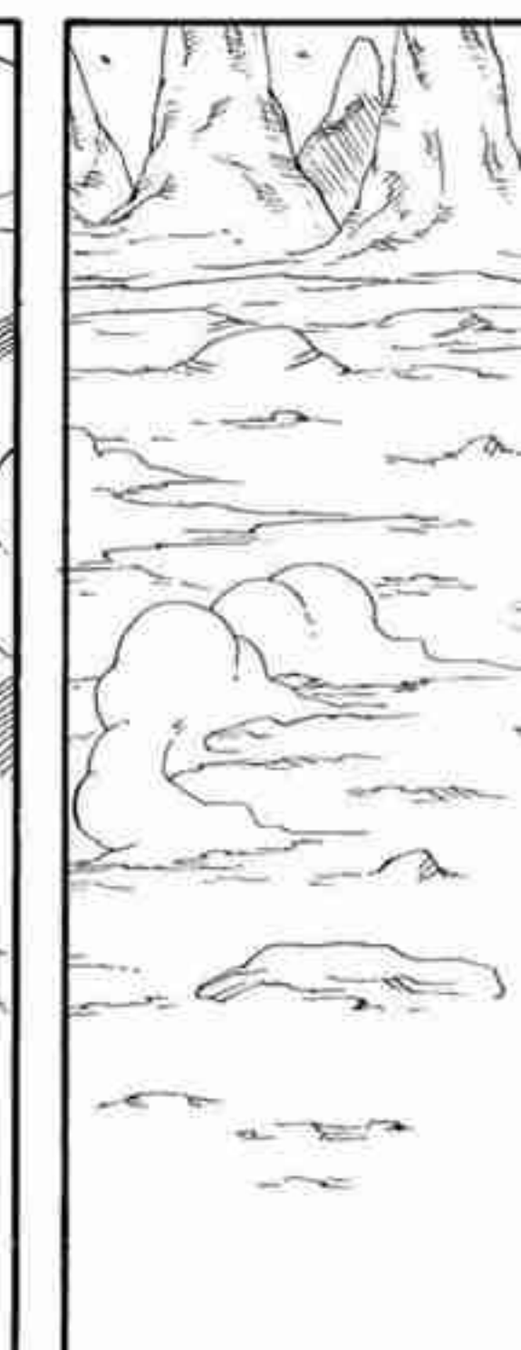
HOW-EVER... HEH HEH...

TAK

HIP
AKA-MARU!!
WHAM
!!
GLARE
TAK
NO!
ARGH! HE DID IT AGAIN ...!!
!!
UNH. GAAAH... MY EYES...

THIS IS THE END!!

FWOO



SHUU
LOOKING FOR SOMEONE?

I'LL HANDLE IT FROM HERE.

RINSE YOUR EYES IN THE RIVER.

ARGH...! IT BURNS... IT'S LIKE ACID IN MY EYES...

YOU... UKON! YOU USED ME AS A SHIELD?!

AGH ...

YOU NEED MORE THAN JUST A GOOD NOSE AND CLAWS TO DEFEAT ME.

YOU CAN'T OVER-POWER ME!

THAT'S MY SKILL... ASSASSI-NATION SPECIALIST.

UGH...

THE KEIRAKUKEI IS ALSO INVOLVED WITH SYSTEMS THAT CONTROL THE FUNCTIONING OF THE ORGANS.

IT'S RELATED TO THE CELLS THEMSELVES...

BUT TO GO INTO A LITTLE MORE DETAIL...

YOU KNOW THAT THE KEIRAKUKEI THROUGH WHICH CHAKRA FLOWS...

...IS ENTWINED DEEPLY WITH EACH INTERNAL ORGAN, DON'T YOU?

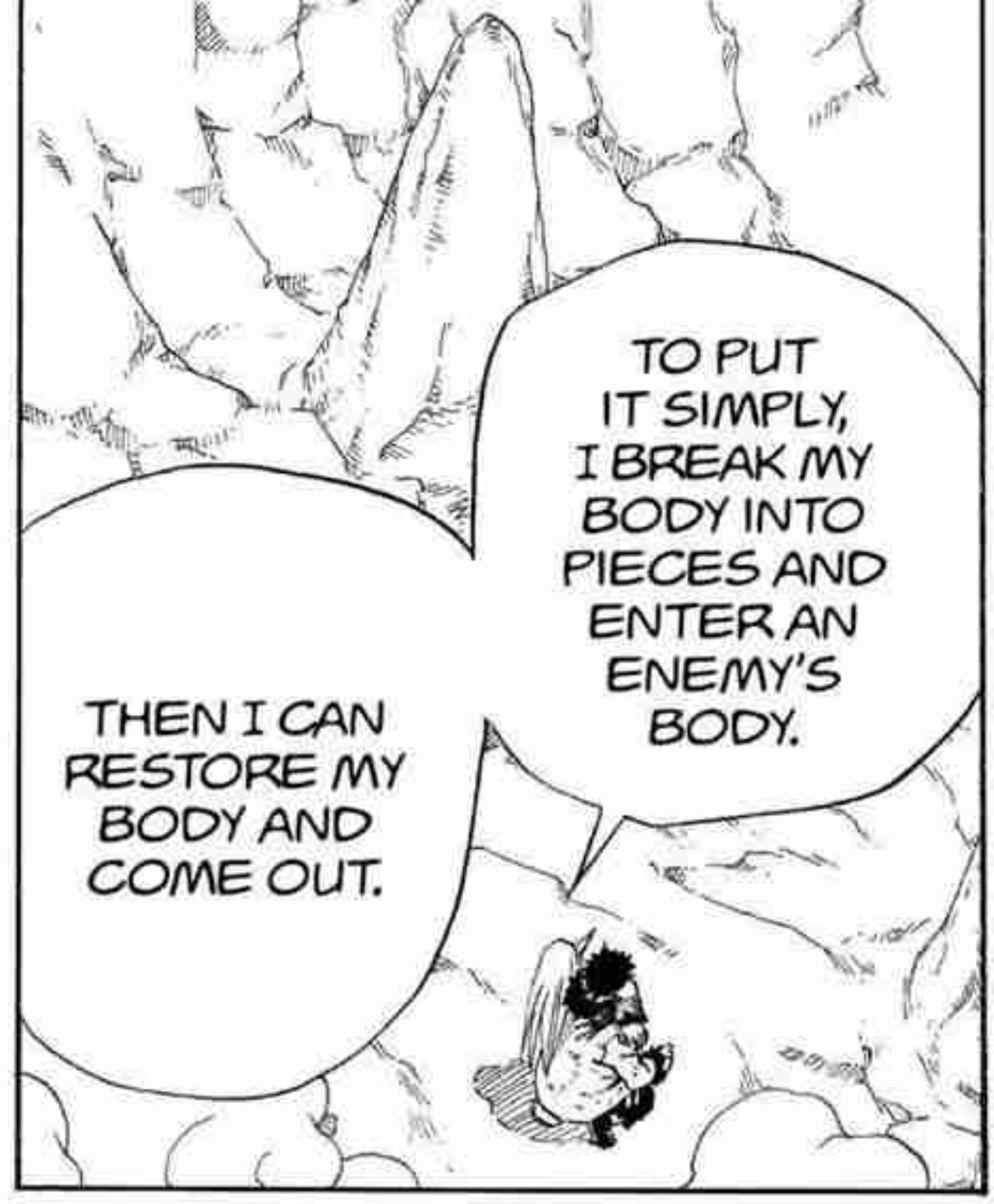
...I CAN DISSOLVE AND REFORM THOSE CELLS AND PROTEINS AT WILL USING CHAKRA.

IN SECOND STATE...

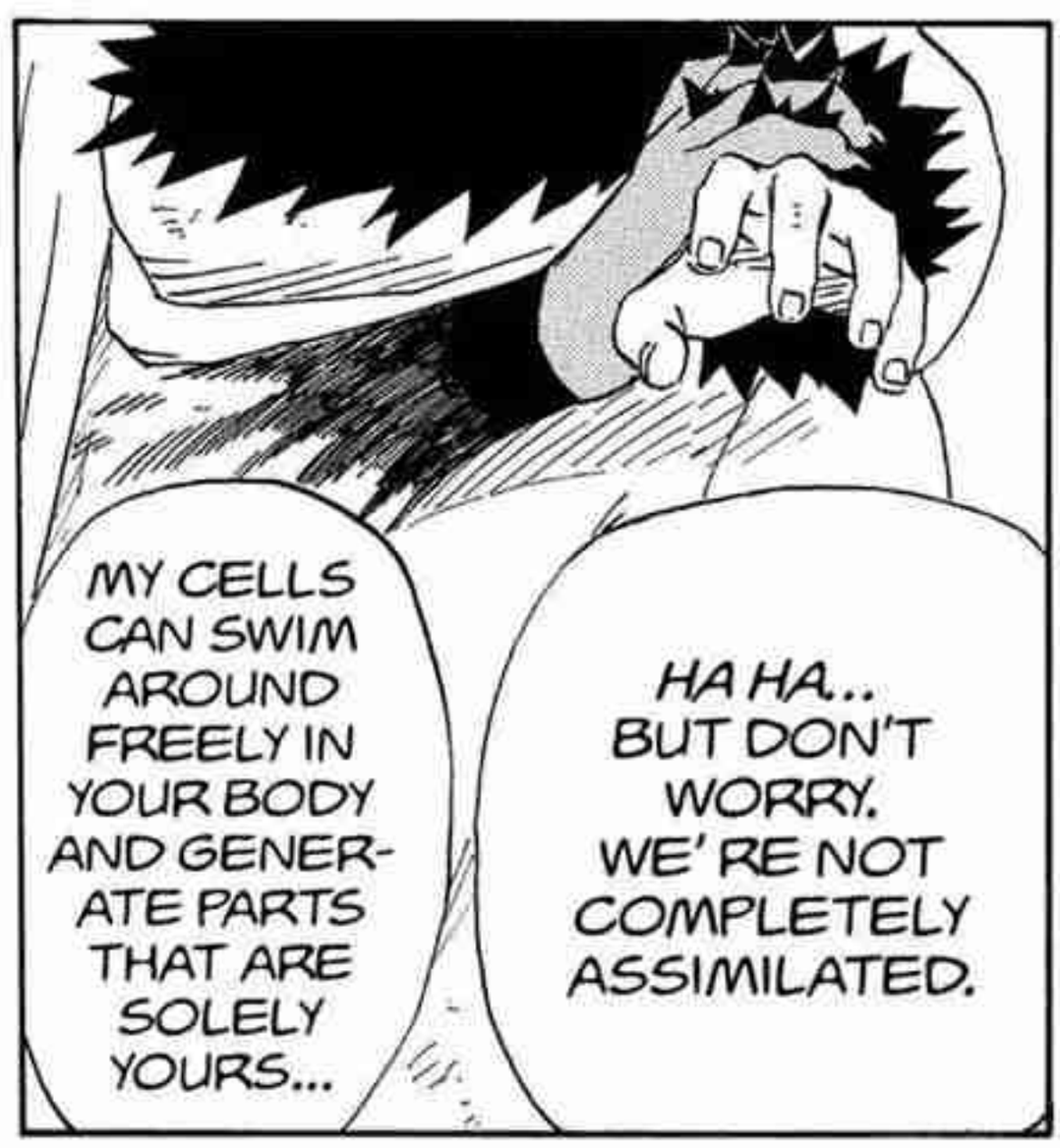
IT'S INTRICATE, COMPLI-CATED...

...AND EVEN AFFECTS THE PROTEIN OF WHICH THE CELLS ARE MADE.

NOW, YOU AND I ARE IN A MERGED STATE...
WE'RE SHARING A BODY.
SHARING ?!


TO PUT IT SIMPLY, I BREAK MY BODY INTO PIECES AND ENTER AN ENEMY'S BODY.
THEN I CAN RESTORE MY BODY AND COME OUT.

I'LL SCRAPE AWAY THE PARTS OF OUR BODY MADE OF YOUR CELLS, THE PARTS MINE HAVEN'T ENTERED.
THEN, THERE'S THE CRUEL WAY OF KILLING YOU.


MY CELLS CAN SWIM AROUND FREELY IN YOUR BODY AND GENERATE PARTS THAT ARE SOLELY YOURS...
HA HA... BUT DON'T WORRY. WE' RE NOT COMPLETELY ASSIMILATED.

?!

SHUP

AND THEN...

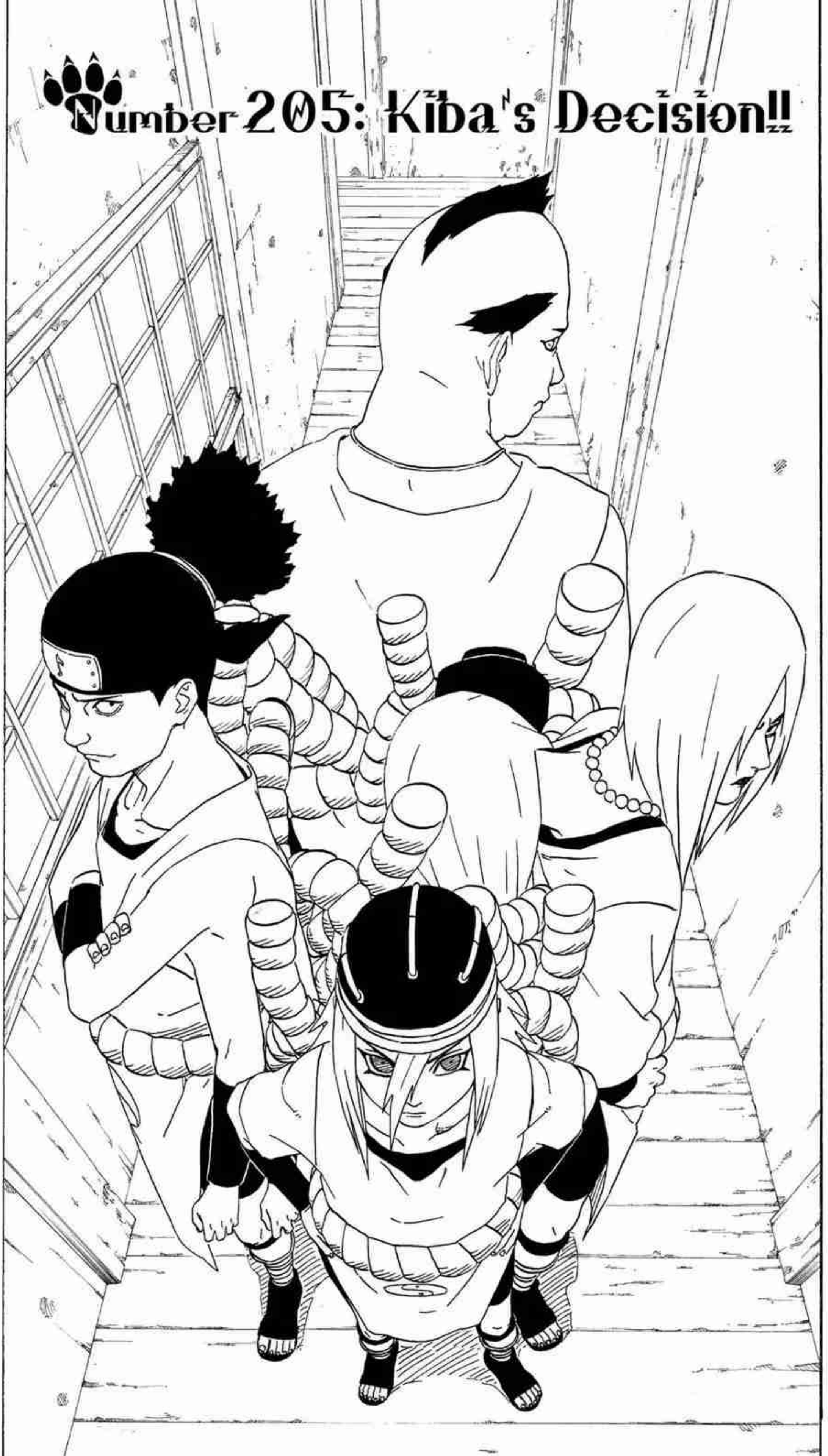
CRACK

HE'D SACRIFICE HIMSELF ...?!
IT CAN'T BE!!
UGH... URK...
WHIRL WHIRL
HMPH... WHAT IF I... DO THIS?

DIE WITH ME...

NARUTO
TM

Number 205: Kiba's Decision!!



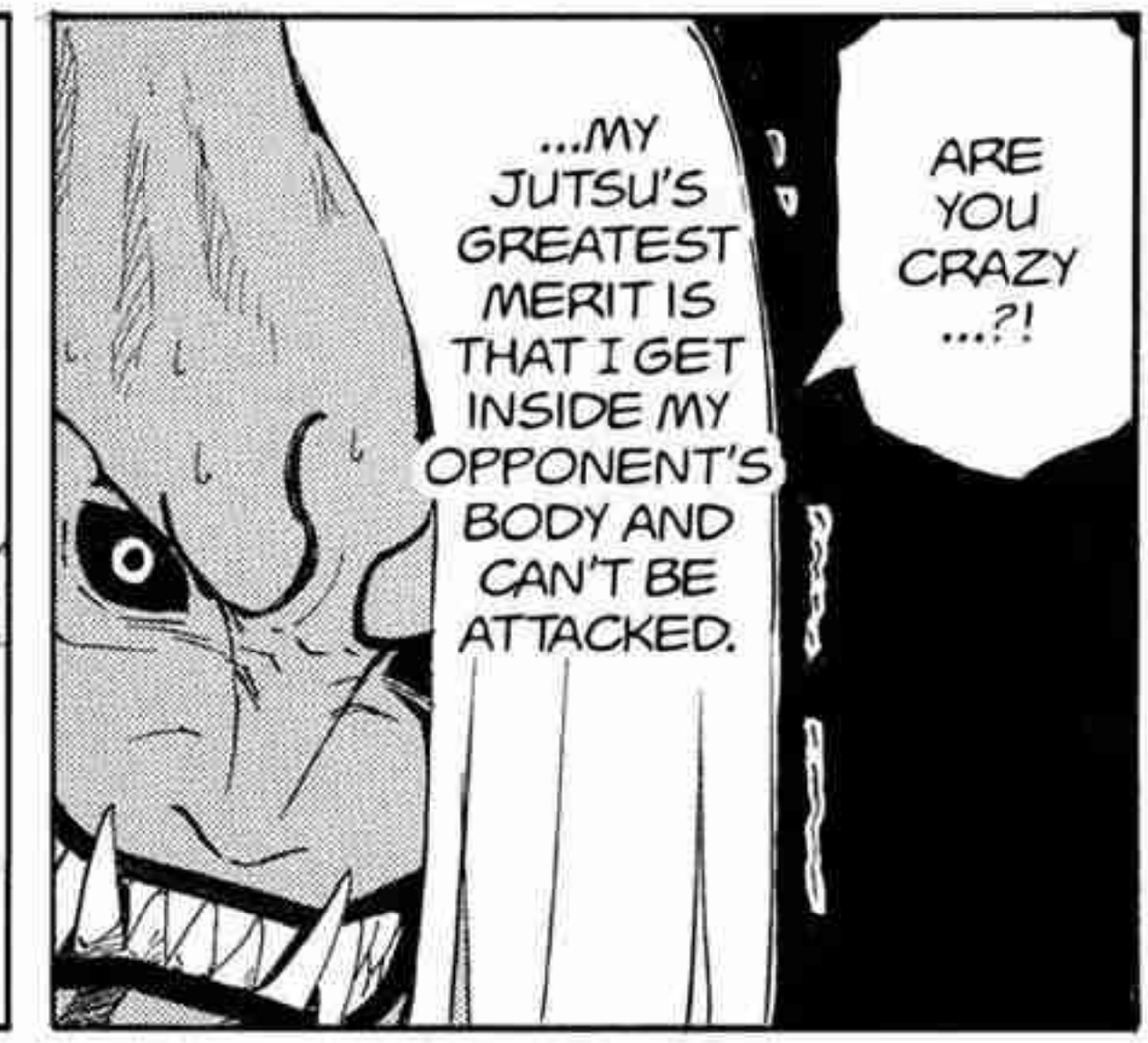
WHIRL
WHIRL
SPLEK!

AAUGH ...!!
UGH!!

AFTER ALL... WE'RE SHARING A BODY, AREN'T WE?
HEH HEH...
YUP... JUST AS I THOUGHT ...
HUF
HUF

NGH ...!
FOOL, WHAT ARE YOU DOING ...?!
SHLUGK

HEH... HURTS DOESN'T IT?
NO ONE'S EVER DONE THIS...


...MY JUTSU'S GREATEST MERIT IS THAT I GET INSIDE MY OPPONENT'S BODY AND CAN'T BE ATTACKED.
ARE YOU CRAZY ...?!

!!
GRIP
SHF
THEN LET'S PUT US OUT OF OUR MISERY!

SPL

SHUP

THUD

I'M LOSING BLOOD...
GLUG GLUG

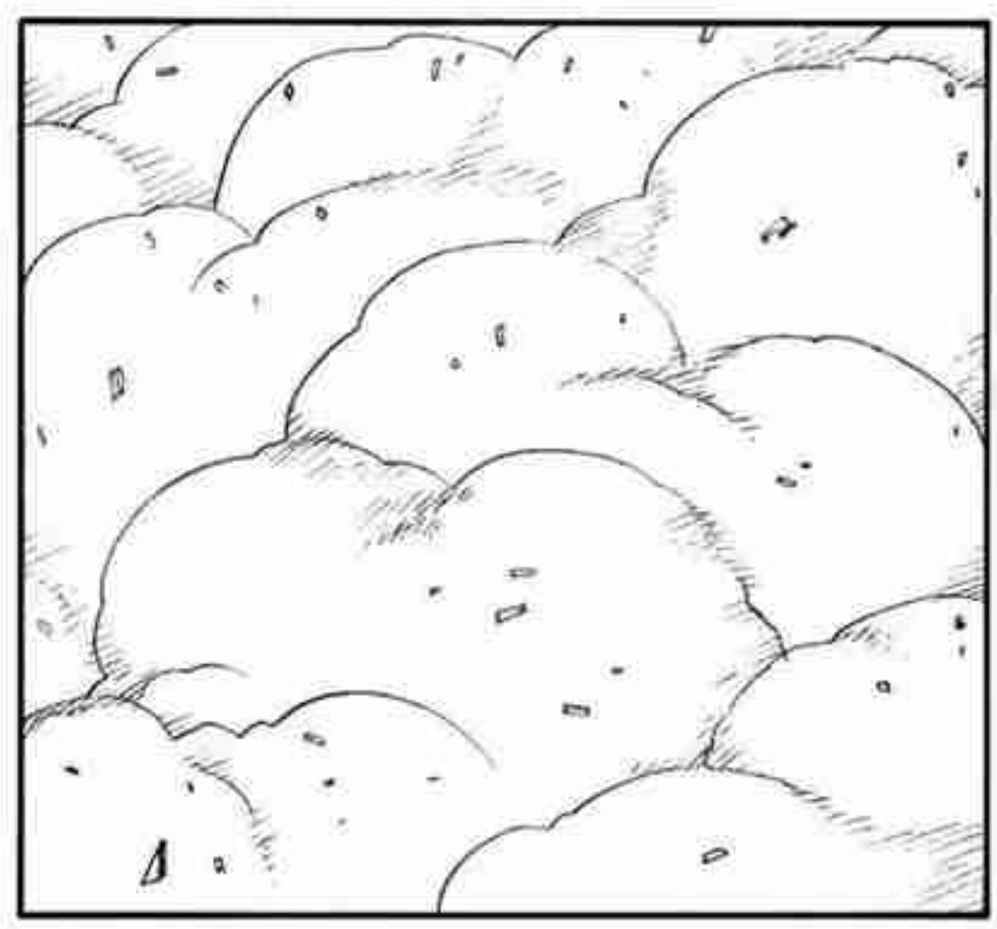
UGH...!

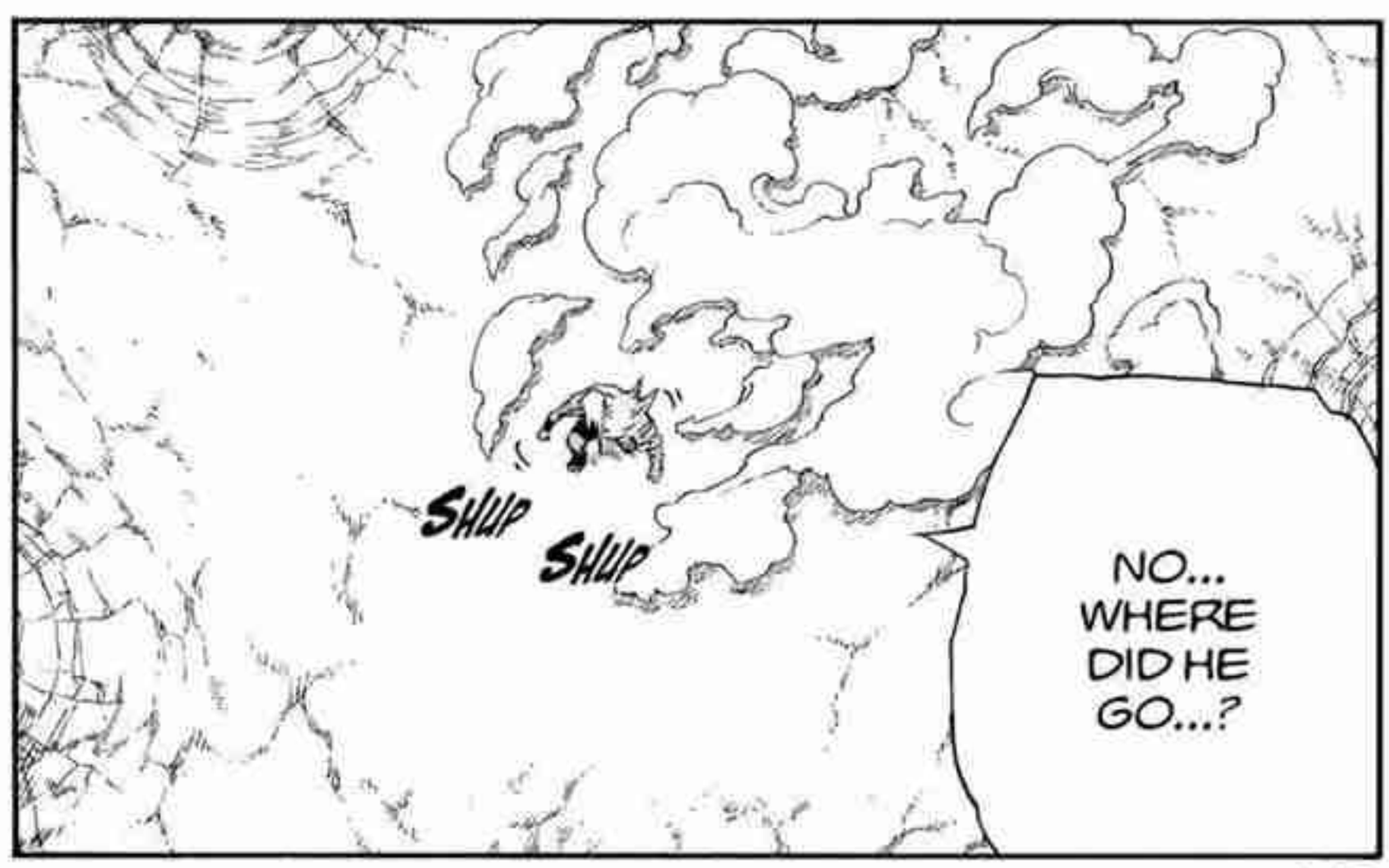
READ THIS WAY
ARGH...!
SHAK
!
TSK!
GLARE
SHF
THUNK
?!!

BO OF

A SMOKE BOMB?!

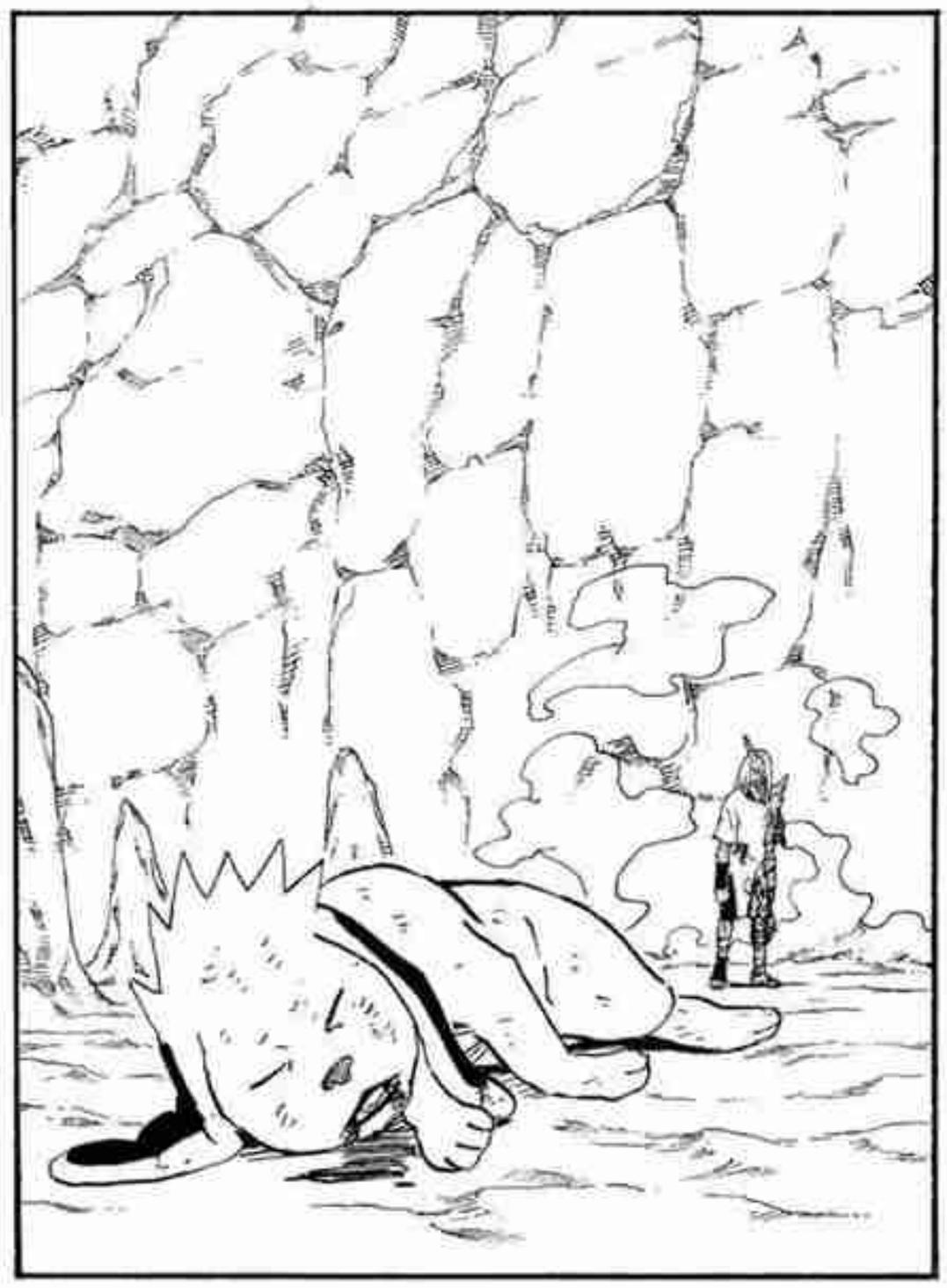
UGH!





READ
THIS
WAY

...THAT'S THE RIGHT DECISION, BUT...
HMPH... HE ABANDONED HIS MUTT AND ESCAPED.
HE'S EVEN MORE HEARTLESS THAN I... HA HA...
TMP
TMP



PUFF

OH, NO...!
?!

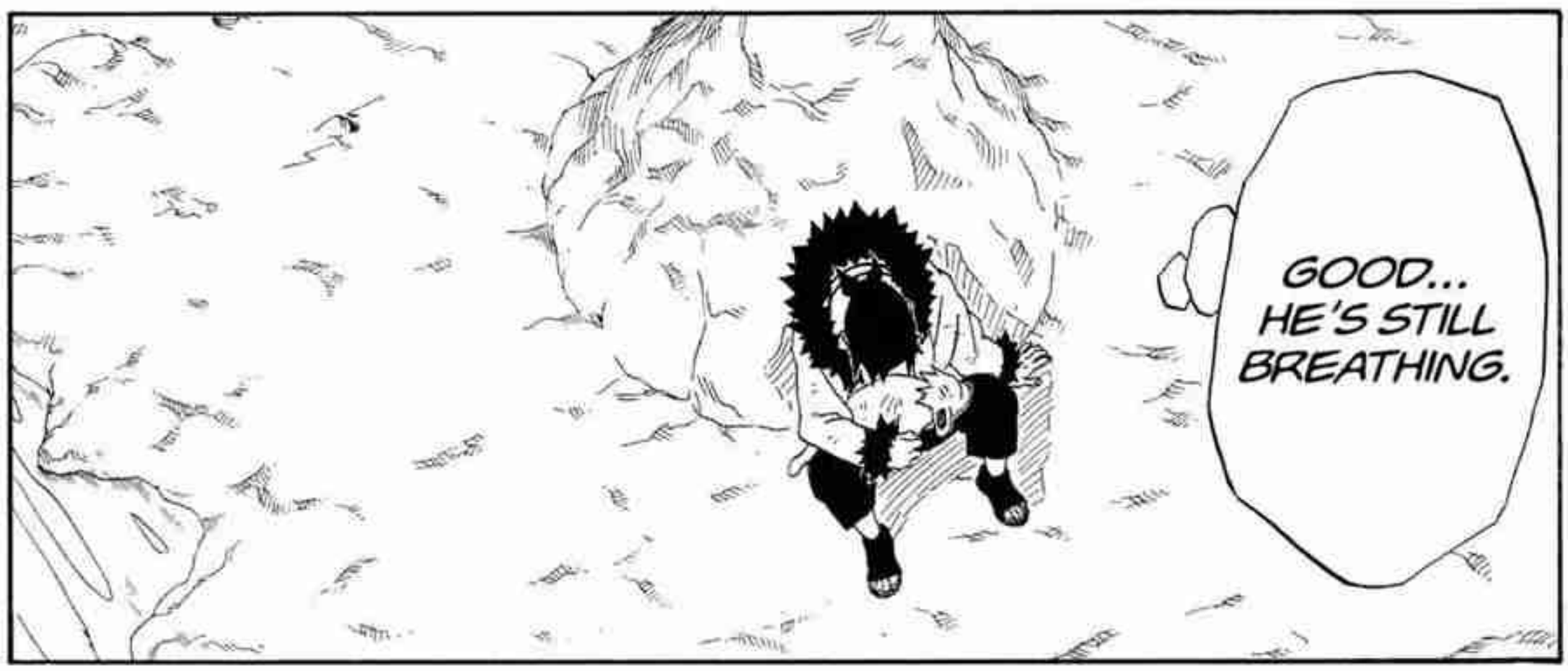
FSSSHH
TAK

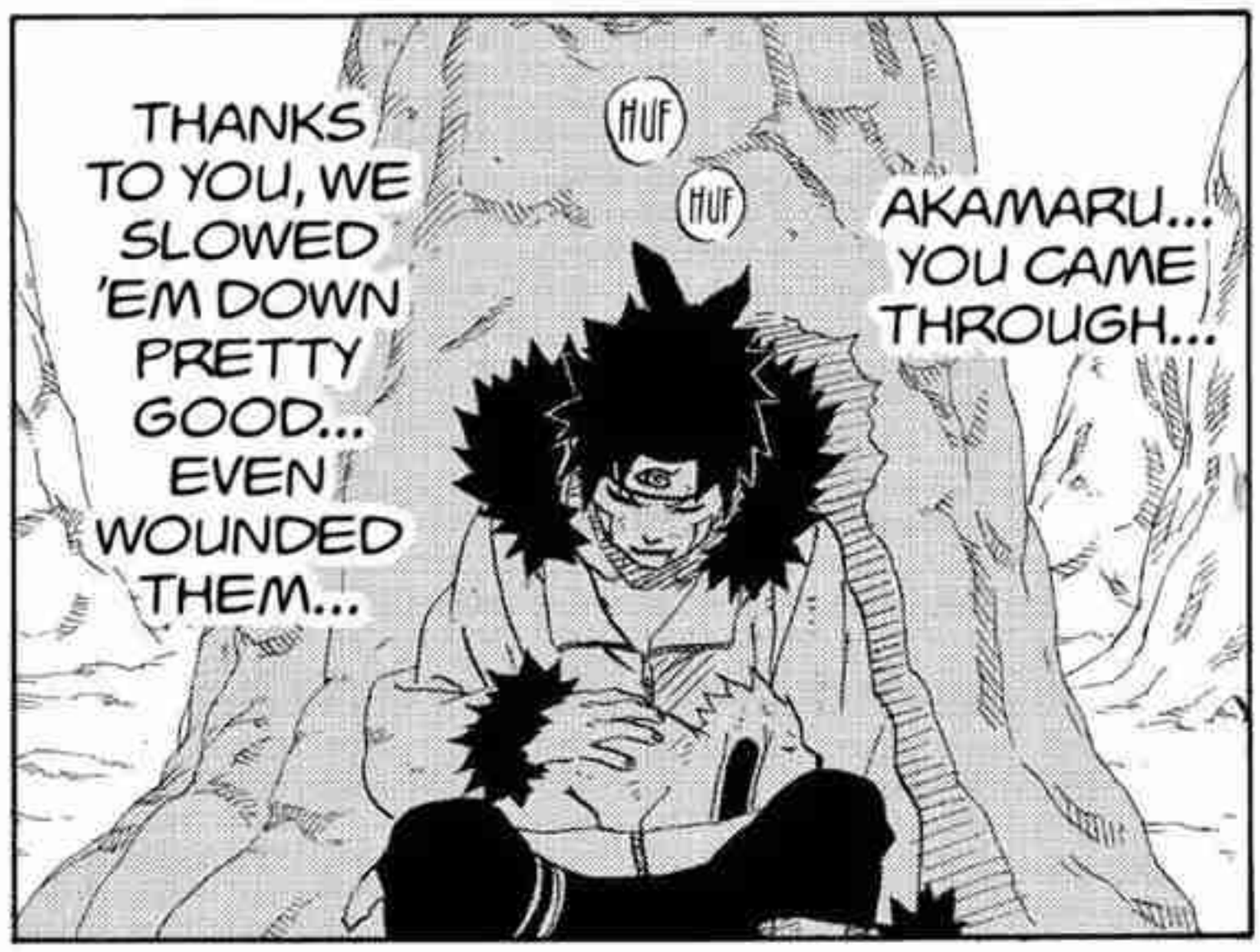
BL
AM

HUF

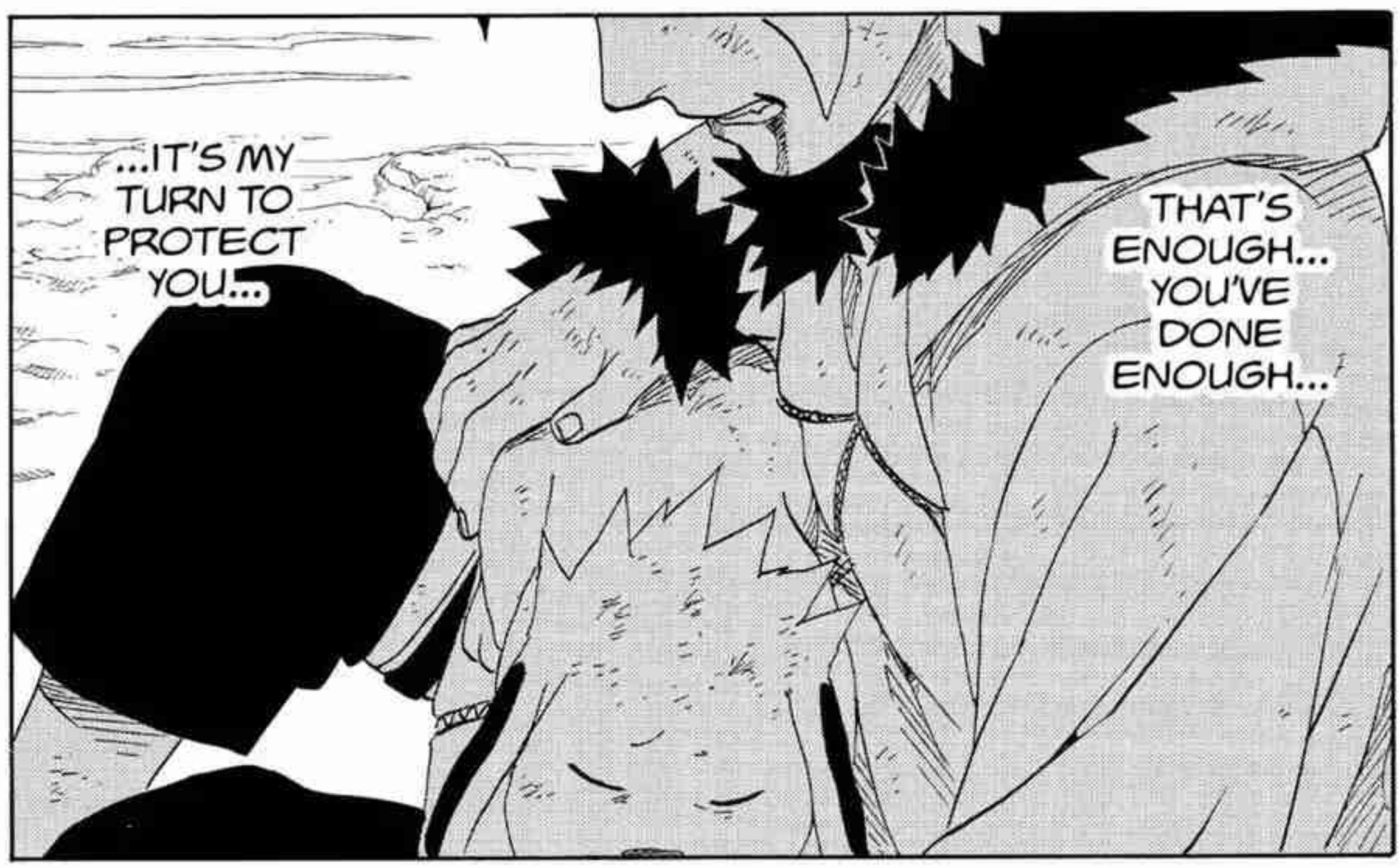
HUF

HUF

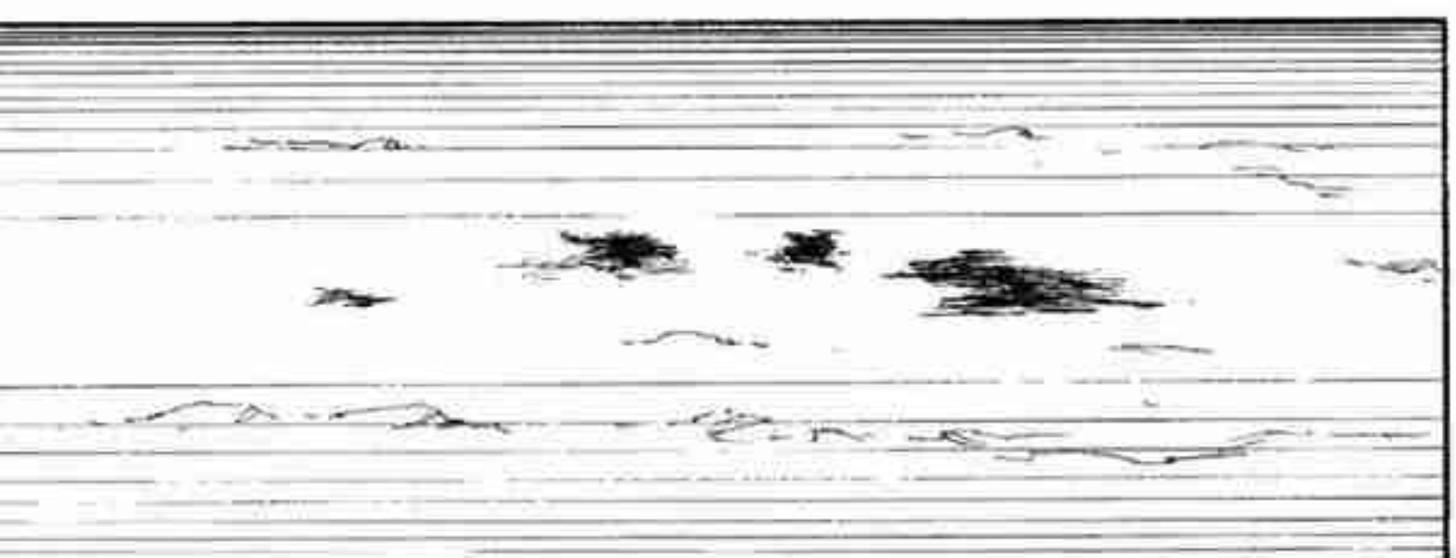


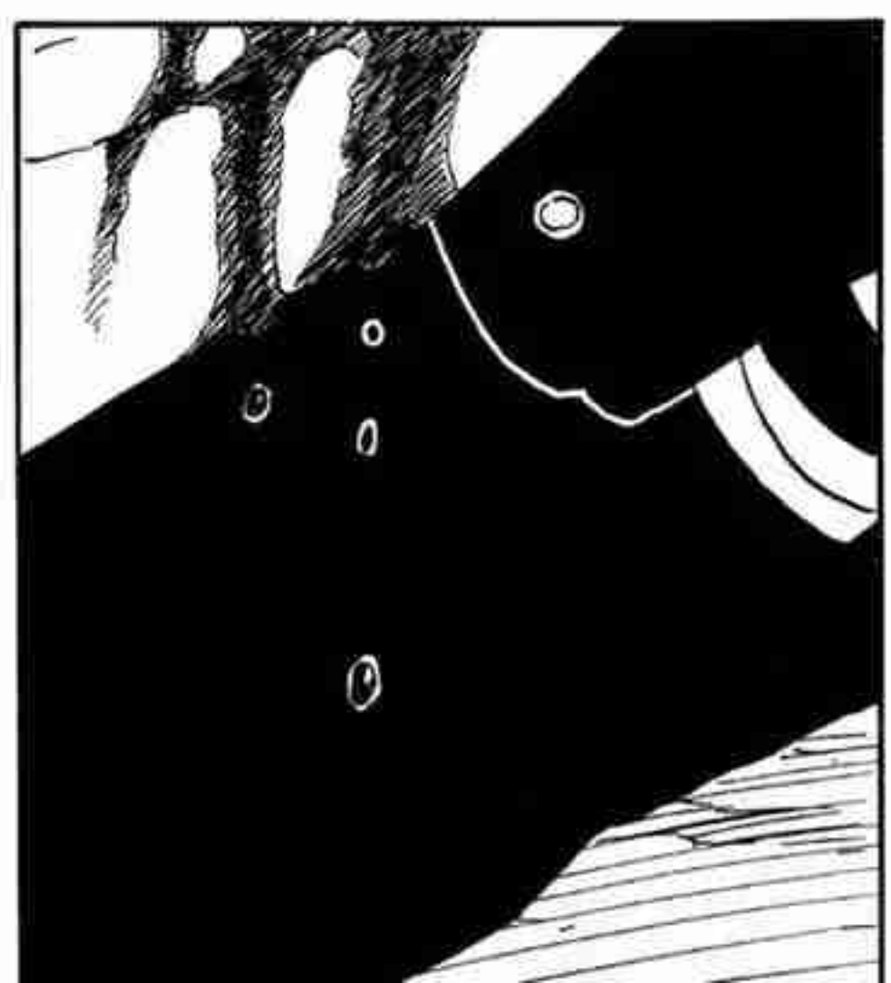

THANKS TO YOU, WE SLOWED 'EM DOWN PRETTY GOOD... EVEN WOUNDED THEM...
HUF
HUF
AKAMARU... YOU CAME THROUGH...

BA DUMP


...IT'S MY TURN TO PROTECT YOU...
THAT'S ENOUGH... YOU'VE DONE ENOUGH...

PLIP
PLIP





THEY SET A TRAP...

SNEAKY RATS...

THEY'RE DEAD!!

...

GRRR

CLOMP

!

SPLOSH

HEY! SAKON! WHERE ARE YOU?!

SAKON!!

!!

YOUR VOICE IS SO LOUD IT EVEN HURTS MY EYES...

WHAT'RE YOU MAKING SUCH A FUSS ABOUT?

GOT THAT? TAKE THEM ALIVE, SAKON!!

I'LL FINISH THEM OFF WHEN I AWAKEN!

SHUU

BUT IT'S TIME FOR MY REST...

THEY STILL MUST DIE...

CLOMP CLOMP

KEEP THEM ALIVE!!

BO
OF

BEHOLD! YANAGI NO MAI! WILLOW DANCE!!
TAK
PP

POP

AGH!

AAUGH!
UGH!
ZOOM
TAK

THAK
THAK
POP
POP

READ THIS WAY
YAAAAAH!!
BA

ARGH!

A BONE ...?!

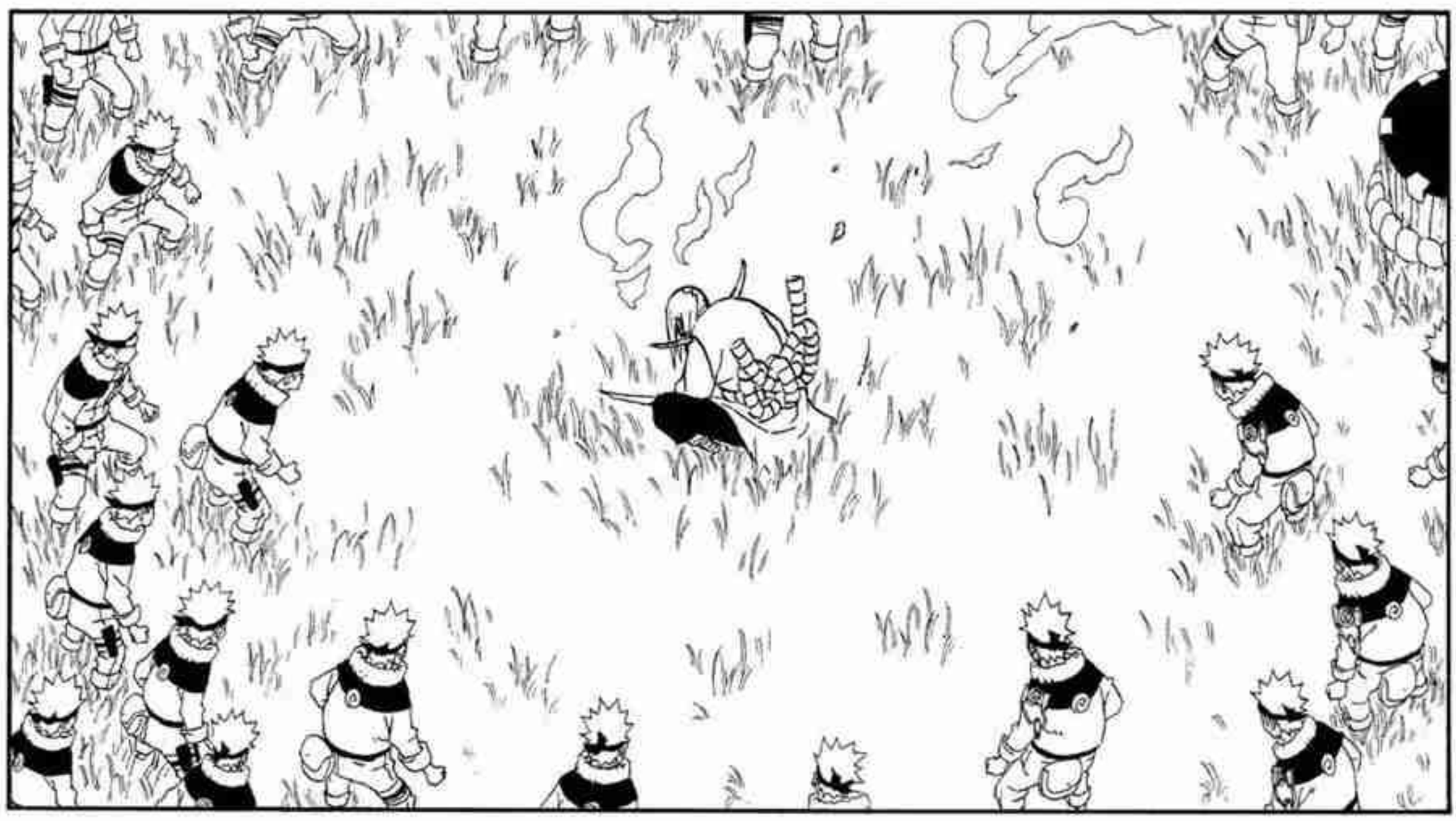
BOOF

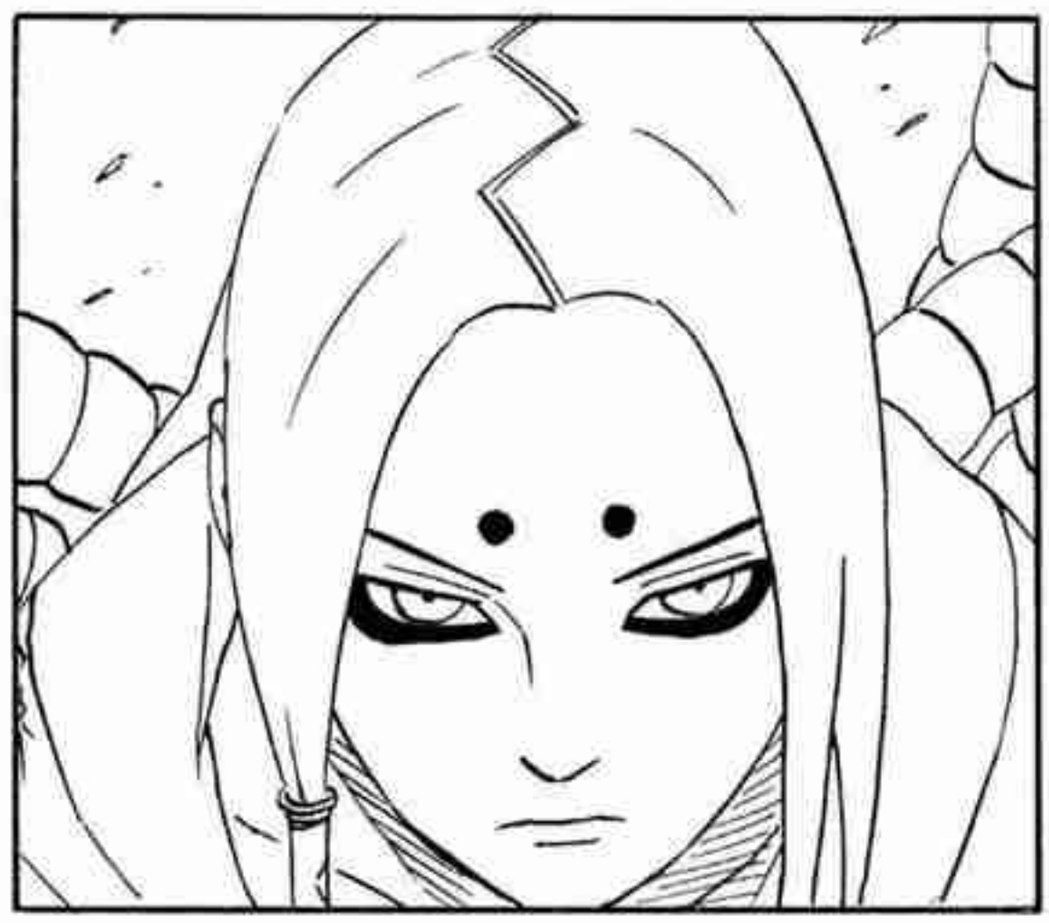
SHF

MY KEKKEI GENKAI.

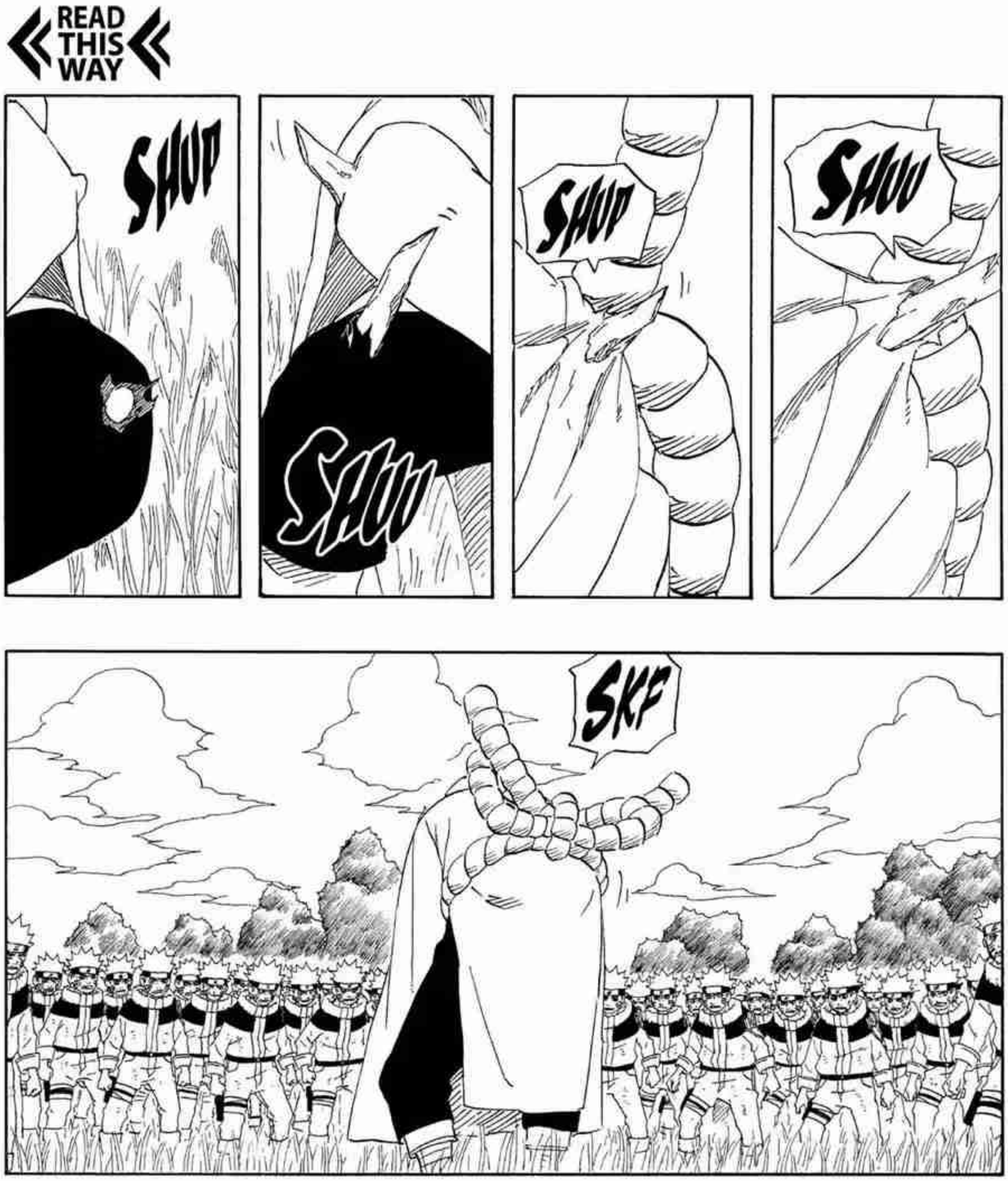
THIS IS...

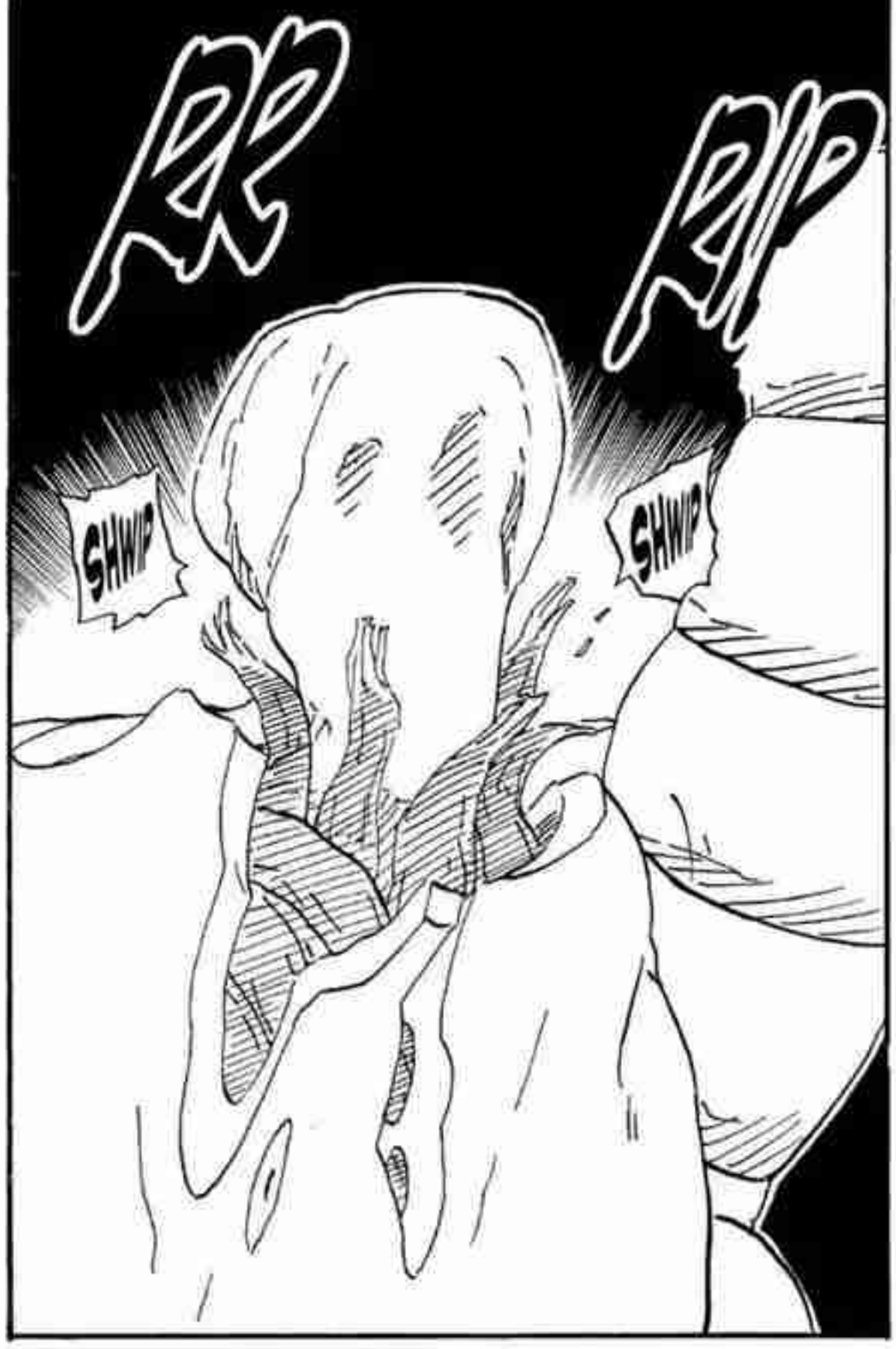
Number 206: Predicament...!!





WHAT IS THIS GUY?! HE YANKED THOSE BONES OUT OF HIS OWN BODY?!


READ THIS WAY
SHUP
SHUU
SHUP
SHUU
SKF
CRACK
SHF
?!
ZIIIP

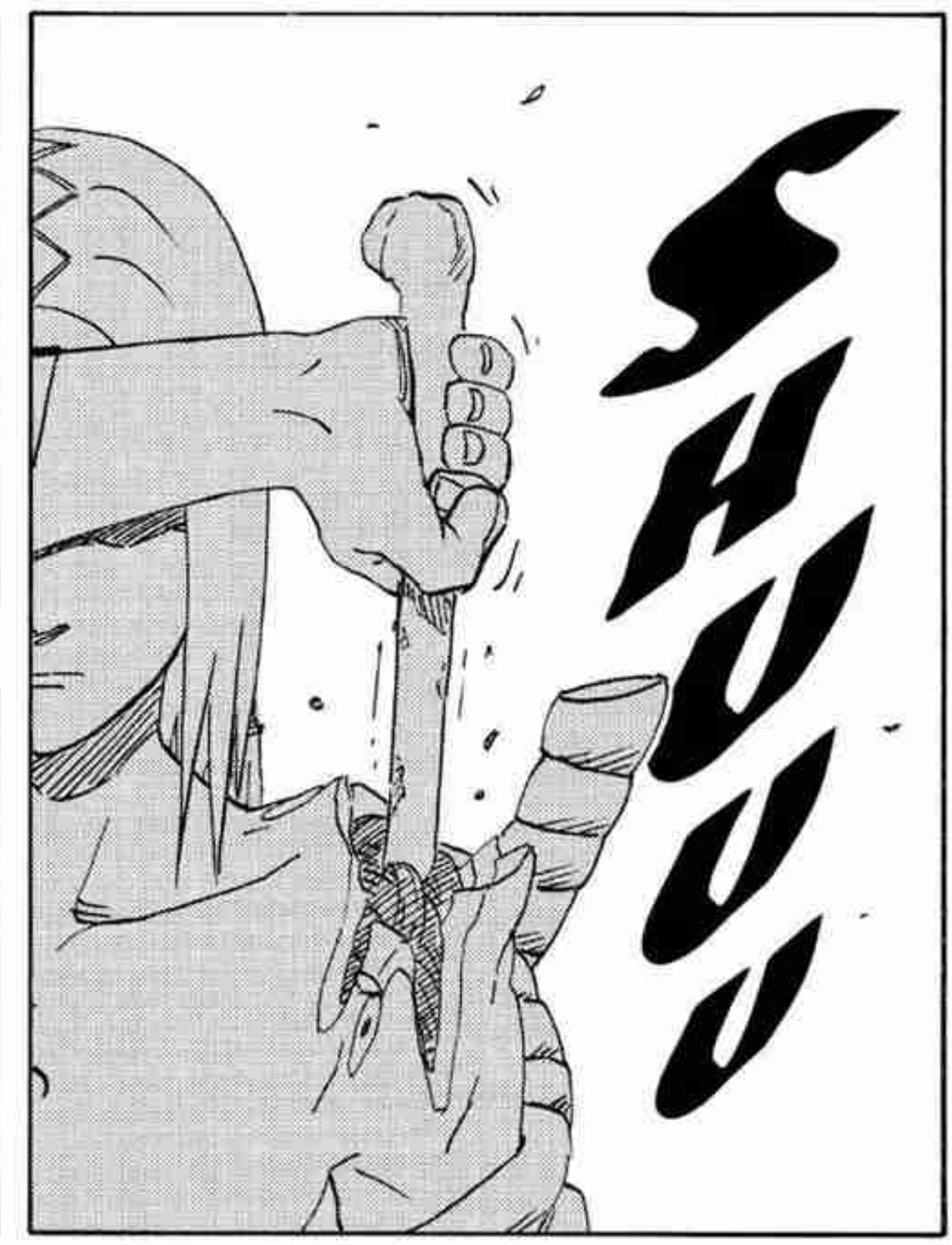

RR
RIP
SHWIP
SHWIP

SHF
SHU

KRIK KRAK
RRRR

READ
THIS
WAY

?!
NO WAY... HE'S...


HUU

SSSHH

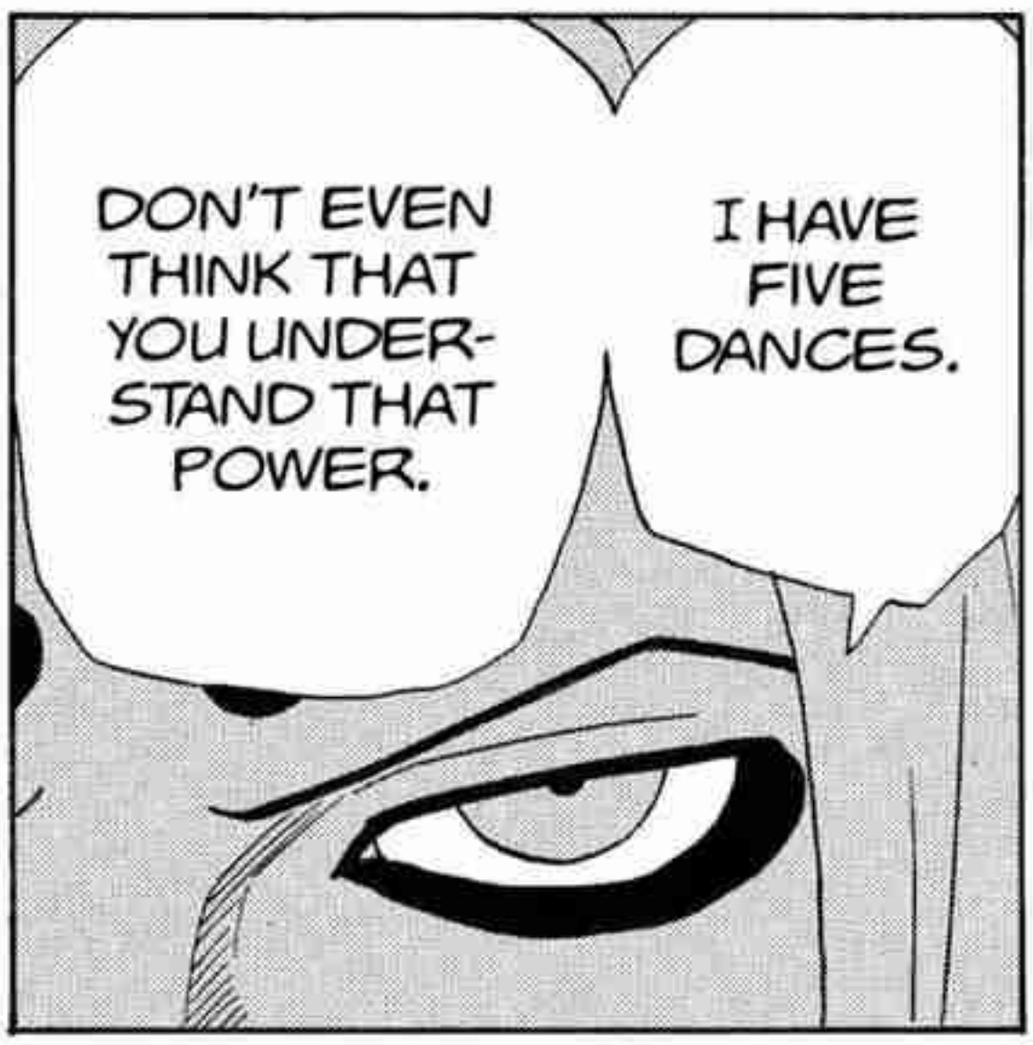
WON'T BE LONG NOW...
?!

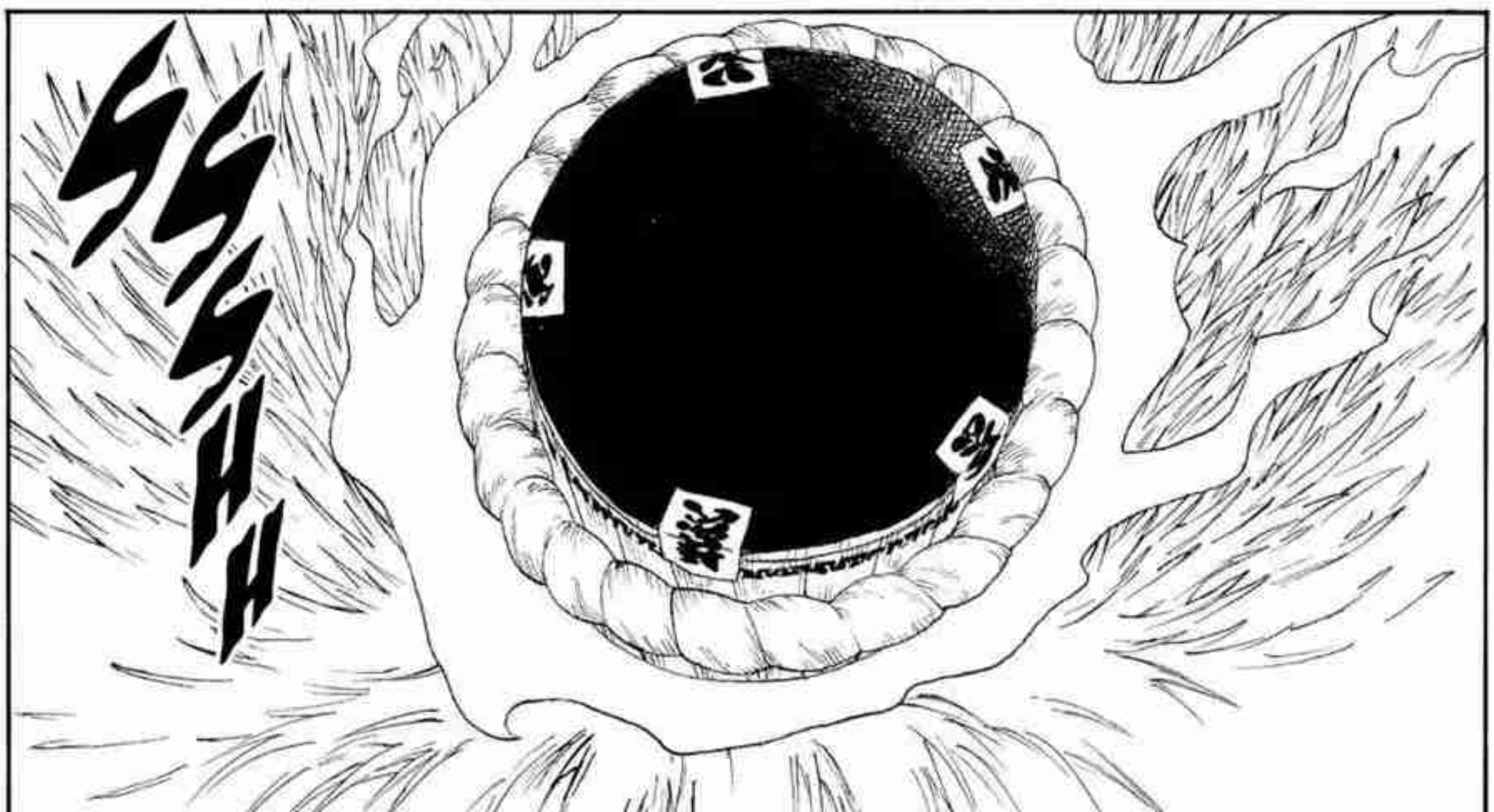
SHUK

READ THIS WAY
SHFF
CLINK
HIS WOUNDS HEALED...
A BONE FOR A SWORD ...?
?!
CHING
CHING

IT'S MAXIMUM DENSITY, HARD AS STEEL.

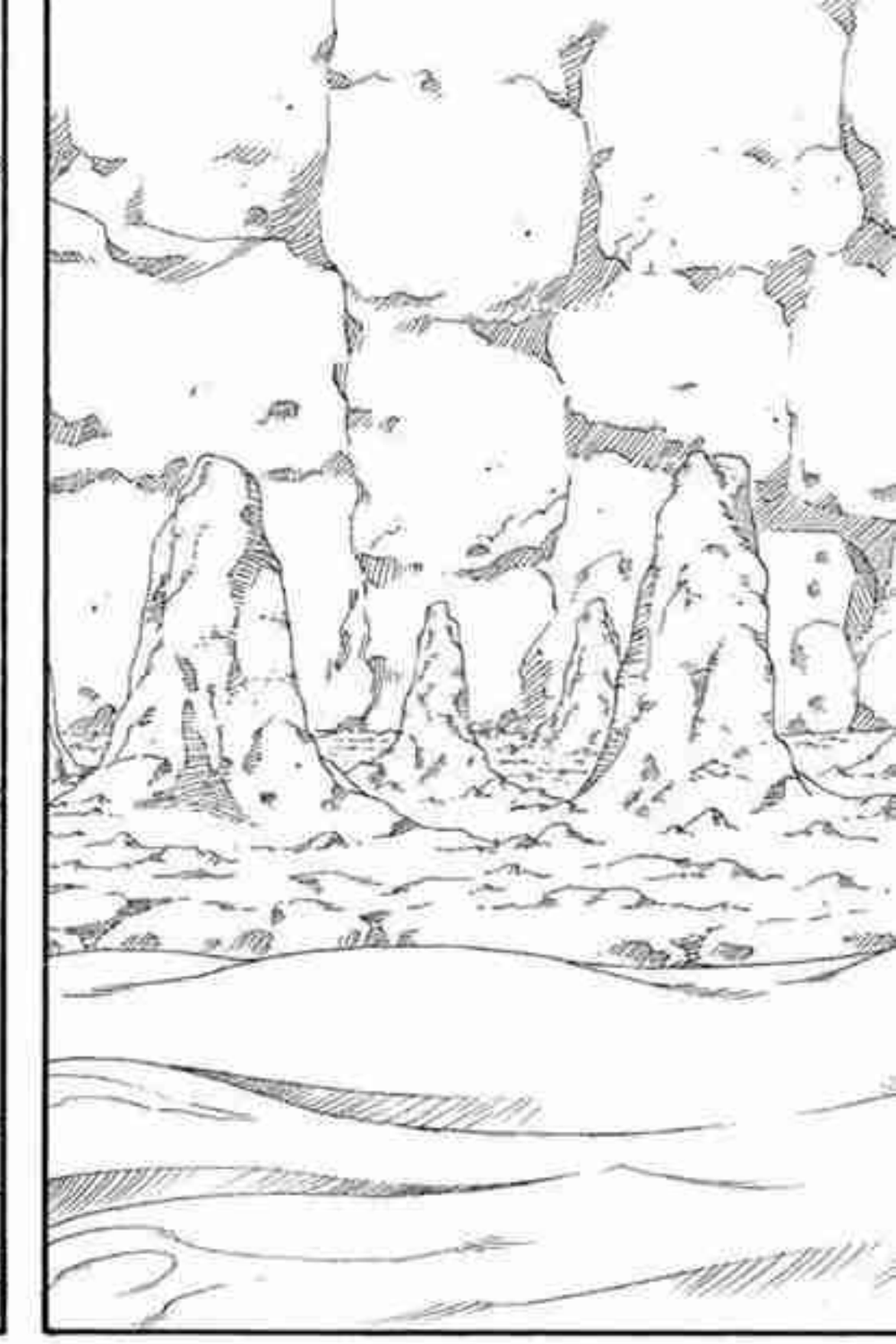
THIS IS NO ORDINARY BONE...

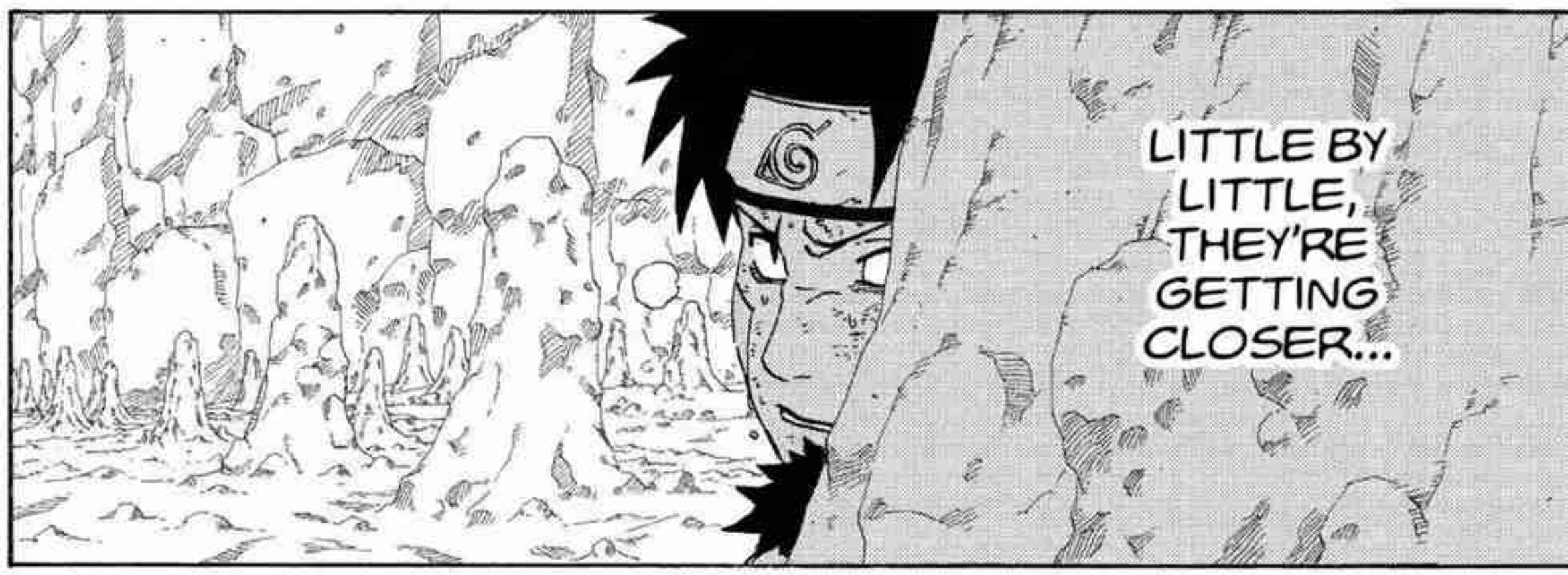




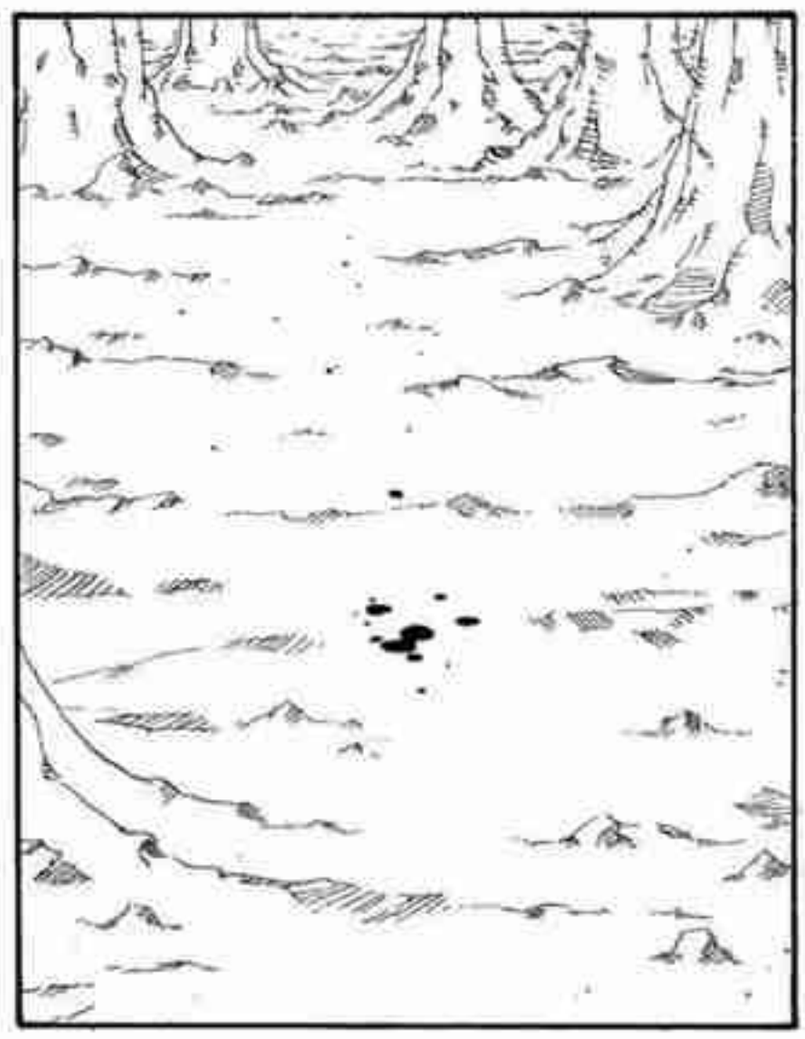
I'LL SHOW YOU TSUBAKI NO MAI! CAMELLIA DANCE!!

PARTI-CULARLY, THE NEXT ONE...



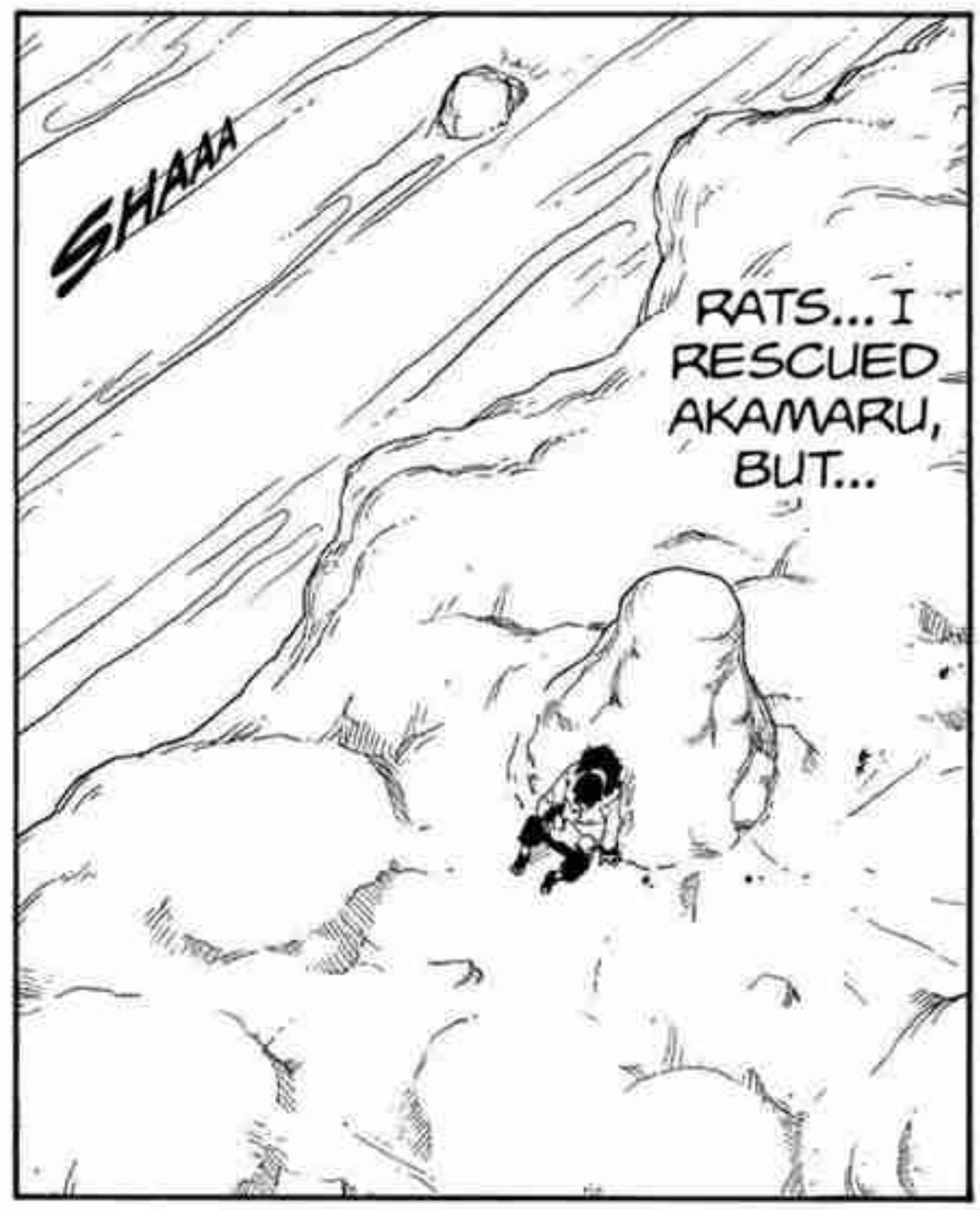

LITTLE BY LITTLE, THEY'RE GETTING CLOSER...

UH-OH... BLOOD-STAINS...
PLIT
PLIT



...

I MIGHT'VE PUSHED IT A LITTLE TOO MUCH... HEH HEH...
OW...


SHAAA
RATS... I RESCUED AKAMARU, BUT...

SNIF SNIF

?!!

SIGH ...

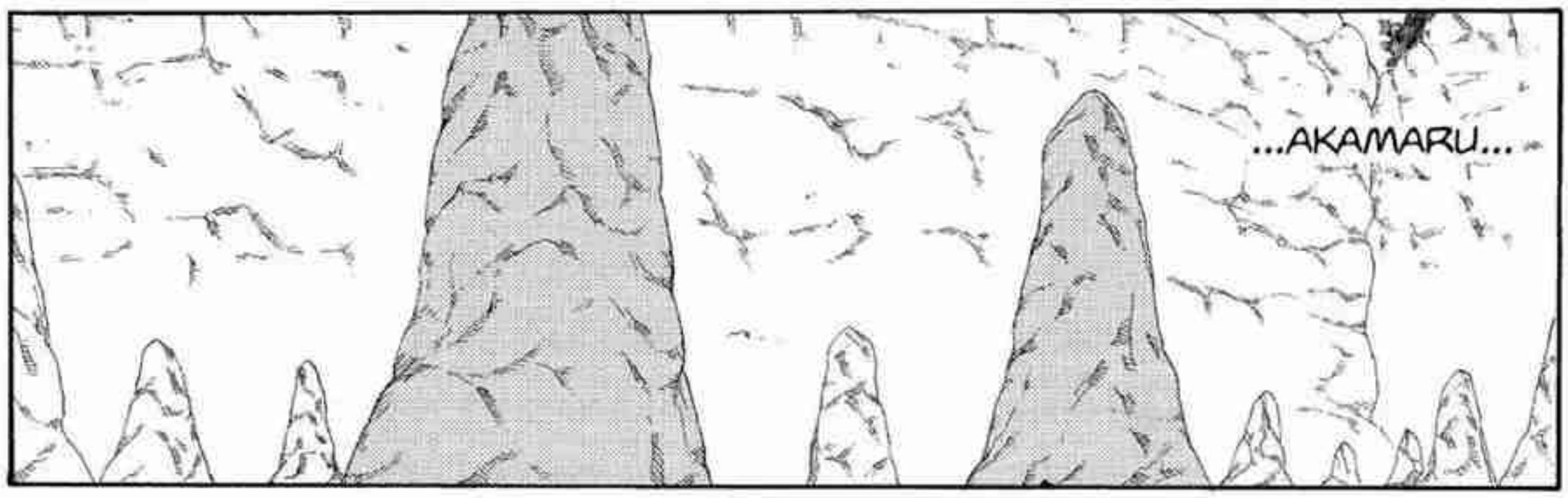
WHY...? WHY ARE THEY COMING THIS WAY...?!
THAT SMELL... WHAT'S GOING ON?!

ZING
!!
UGH...

ANYWAY, I GOTTA GET OUT OF HERE...
SKF
MAN... IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE...

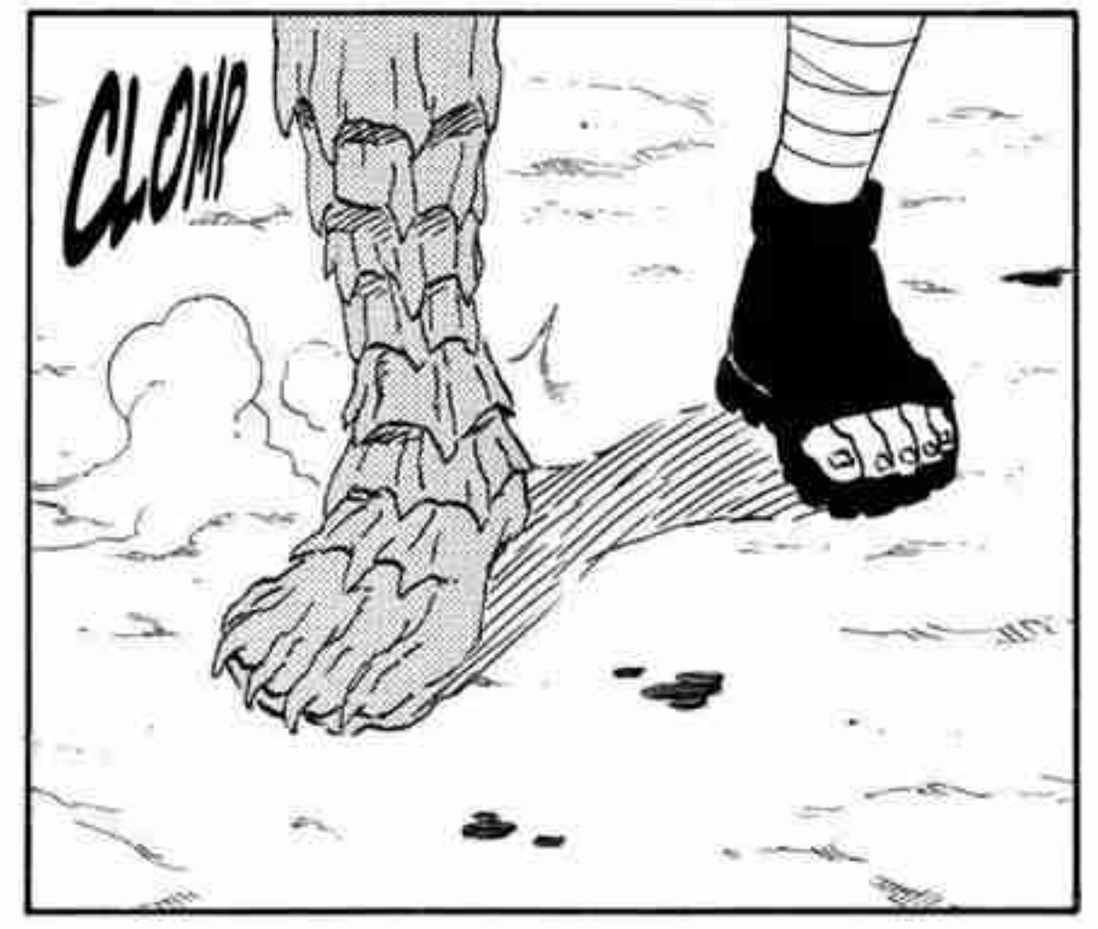
HUF
HUF
...NO GOOD... THE PAIN AND BLOOD LOSS ARE MAKING ME DIZZY. MY BODY... I CAN'T MOVE...
...

FWUMP


...AKAMARU...

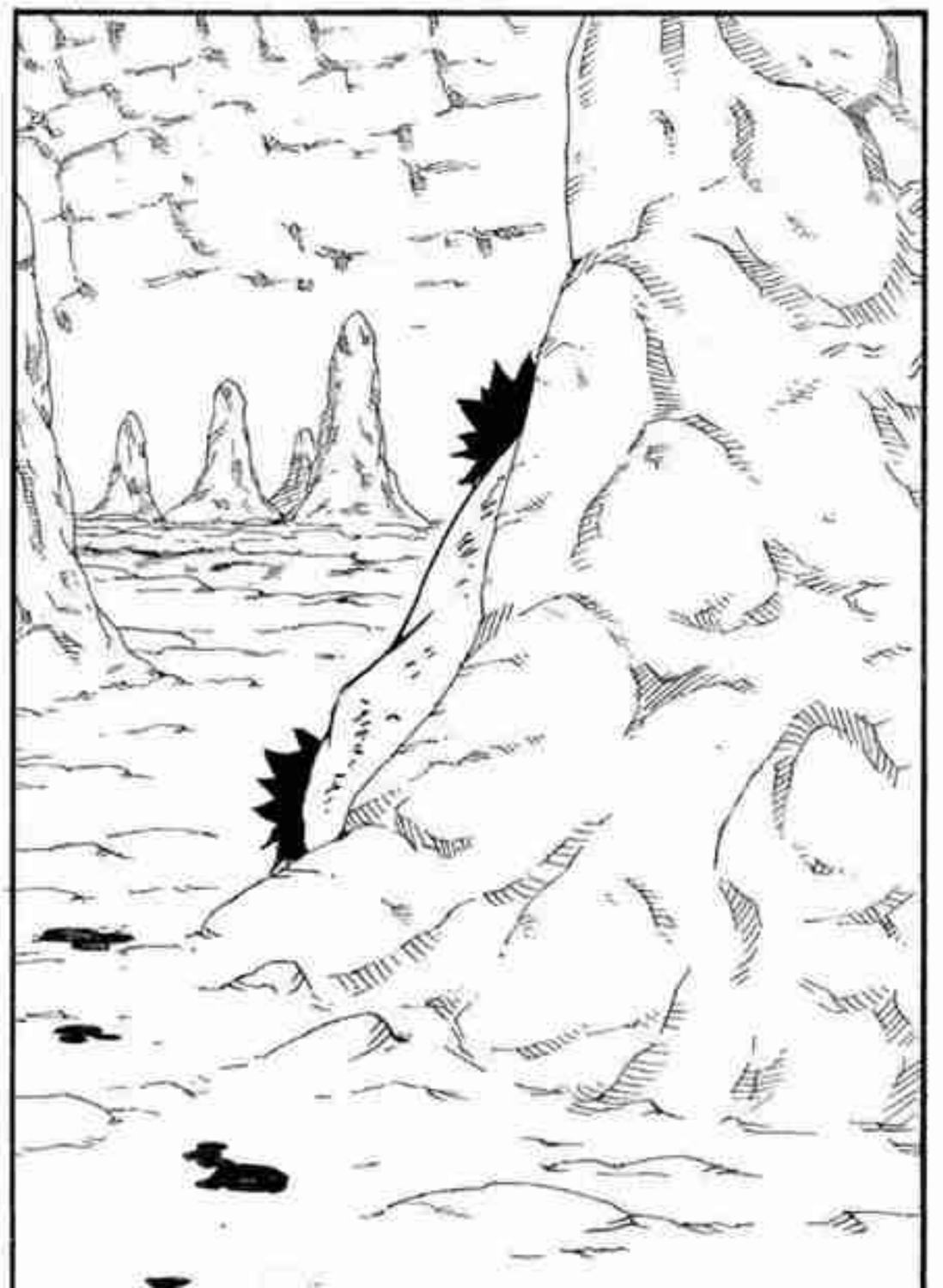
READ
THIS
WAY

GRIN


CLOMP

KRIK

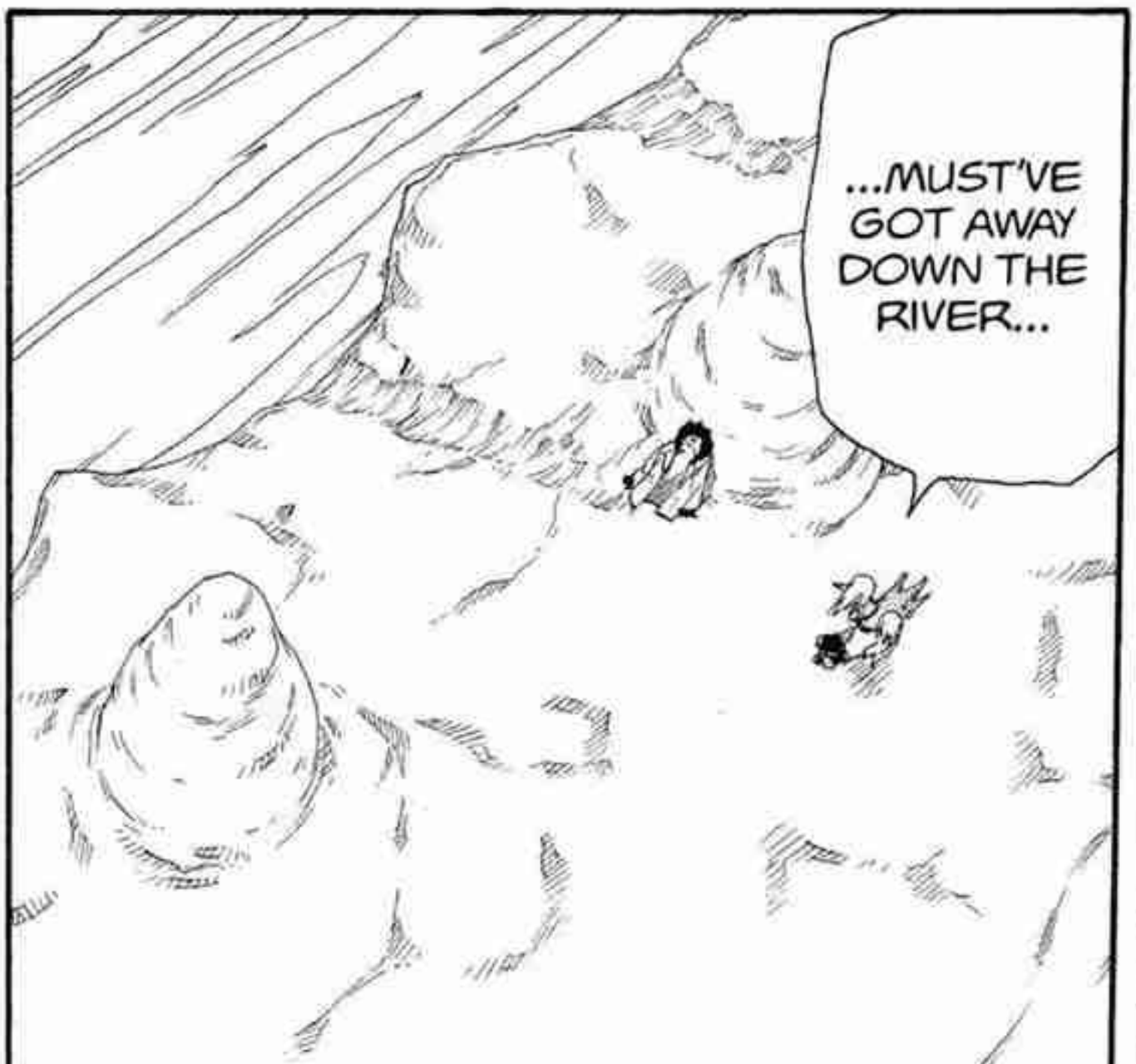
FOO
SH

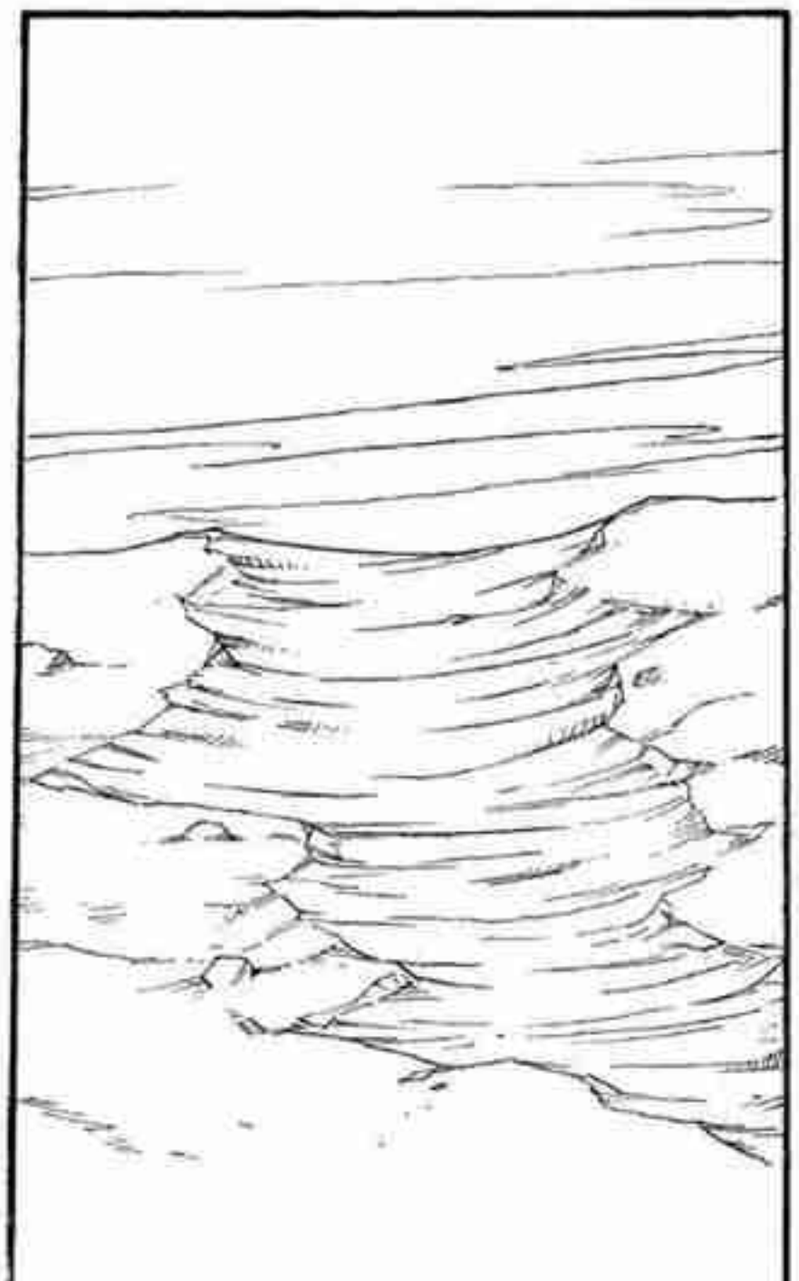


!!

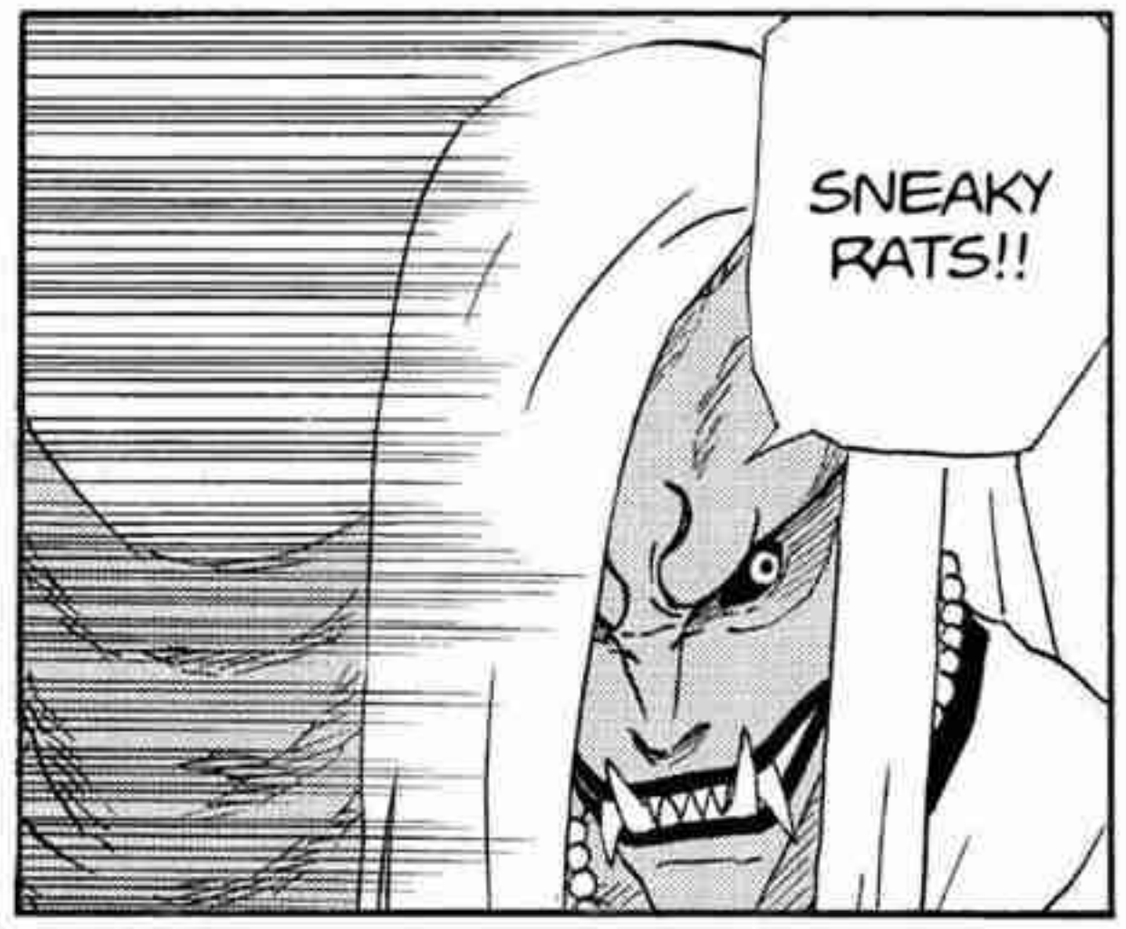
...

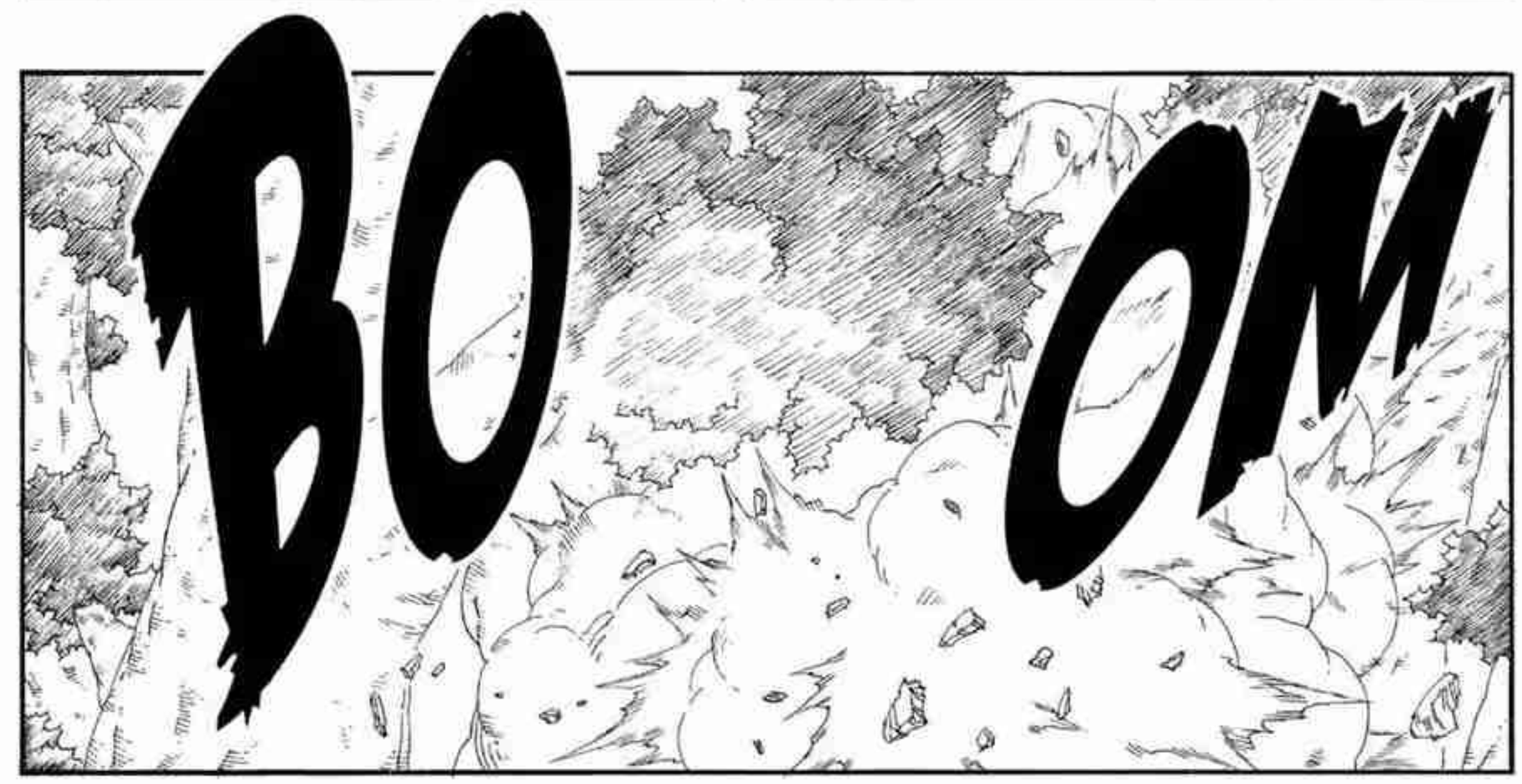
TSK...
TOK


...MUST'VE GOT AWAY DOWN THE RIVER...



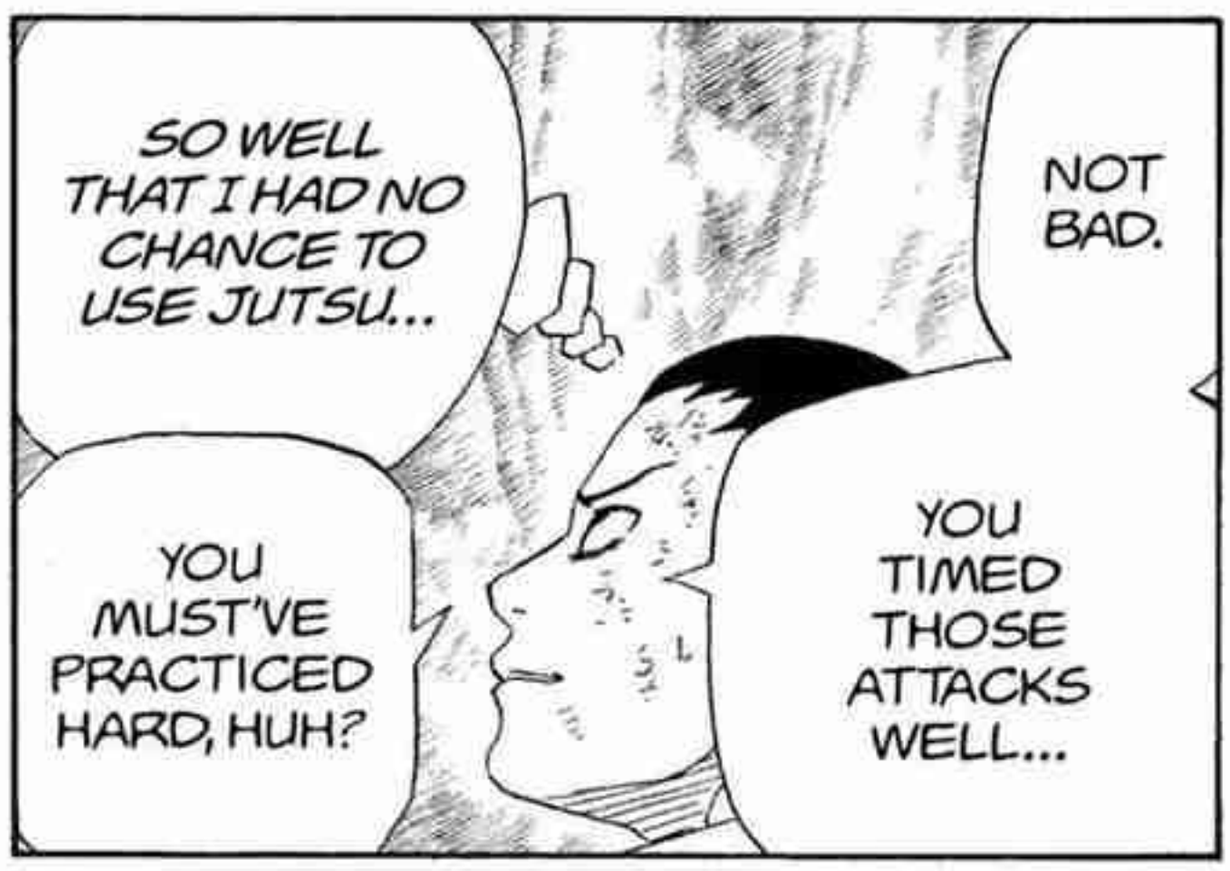
READ
THIS
WAY


SNEAKY RATS!!

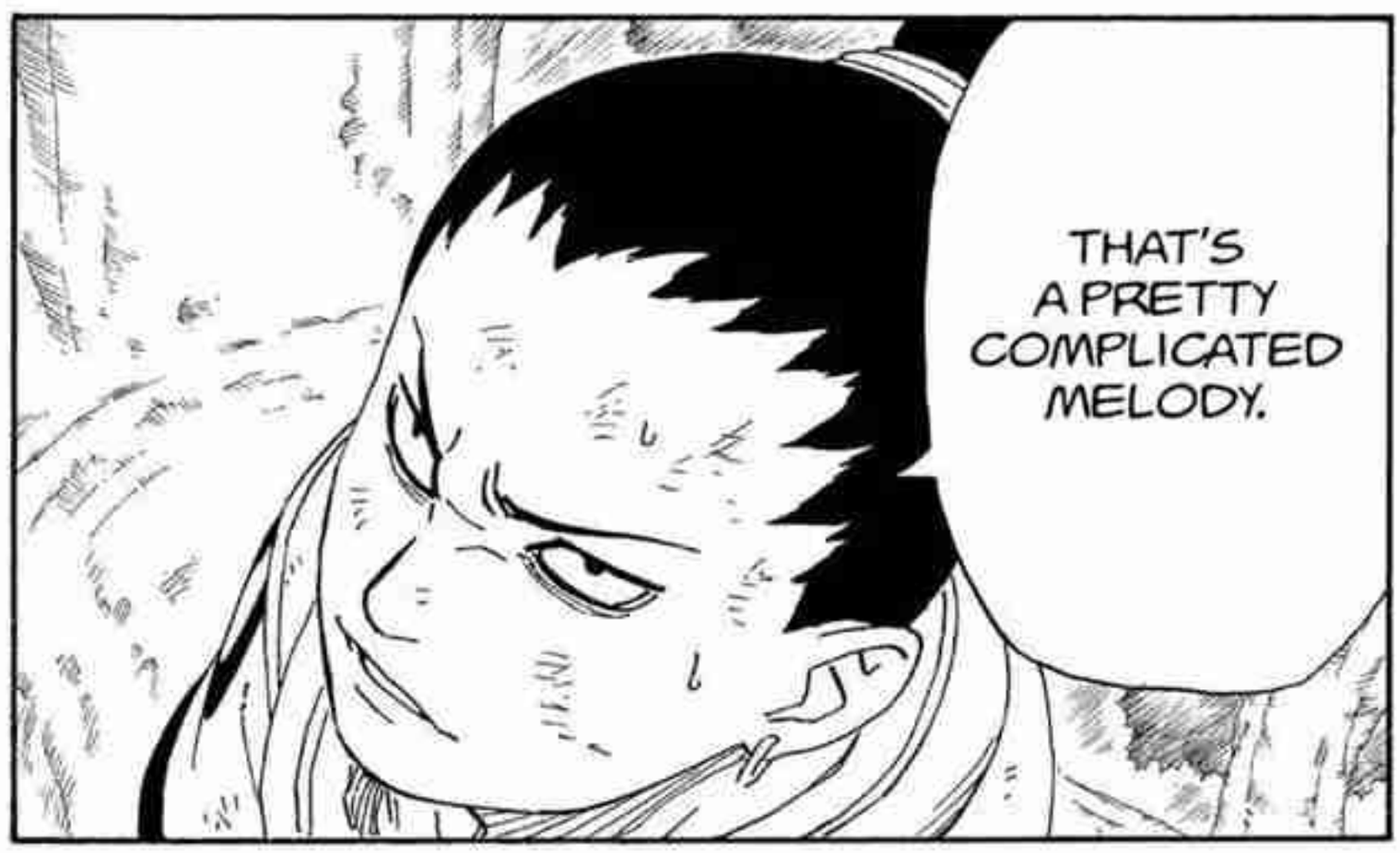

BO
OM

TMP

MUF
MUF


SO WELL THAT I HAD NO CHANCE TO USE JUTSU...
NOT BAD.
YOU MUST'VE PRACTICED HARD, HUH?
YOU TIMED THOSE ATTACKS WELL...

WELL... GOT YOU CORNERED, PUNK!


THAT'S A PRETTY COMPLICATED MELODY.

...

AND THE DIFFICULTY OF THE MELODY... NOT BAD, FOR A LITTLE PUNK.

HMM... YOU FIGURED OUT THAT I CONTROL THEM WITH MY FLUTE.

ART ISN'T REALLY MY STRONG SUIT...

TRUE...

BUT... YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY UNDERSTAND THIS MUSIC COMPLETELY.

IF IT WERE JUST A MATTER OF ANALYTICAL ABILITY I'D BE FINE, BUT...

...THIS TIME, I MIGHT BE IN BIG TROUBLE... BECAUSE...

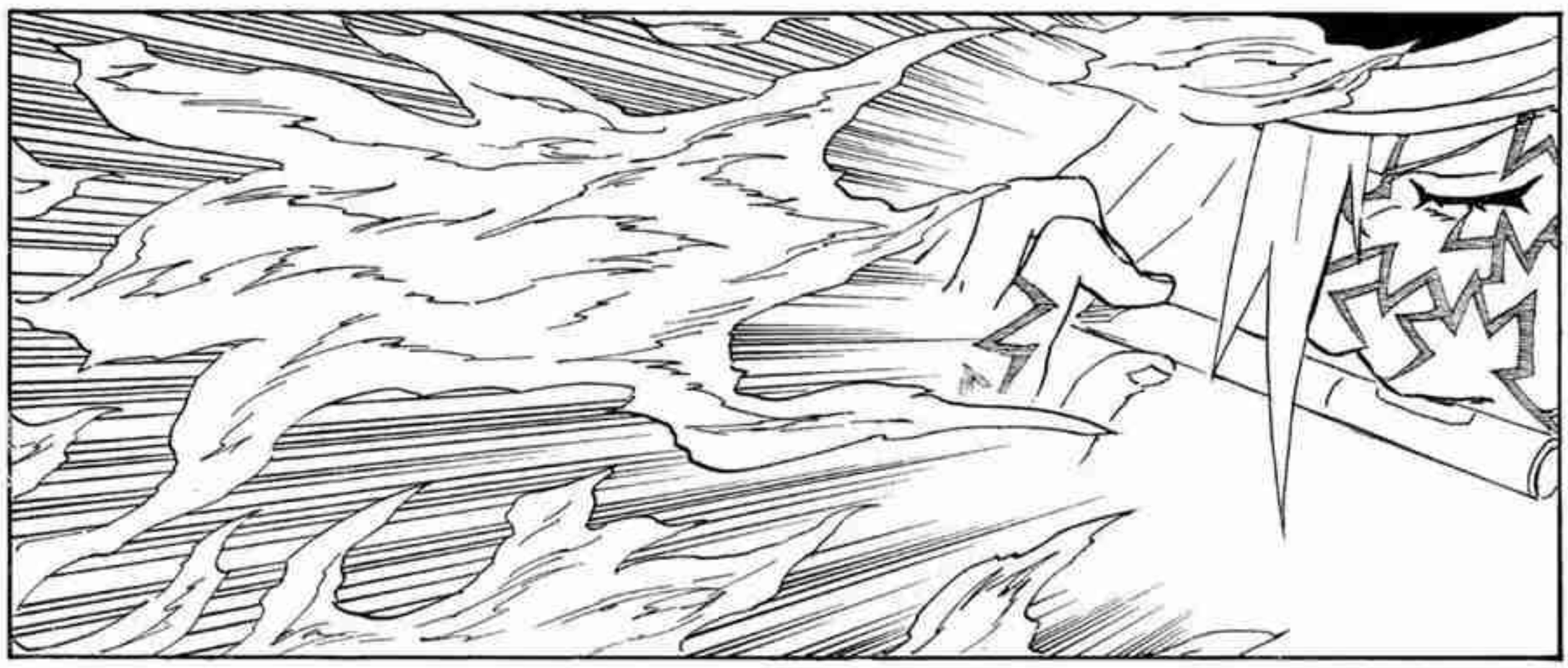
HEH HEH...

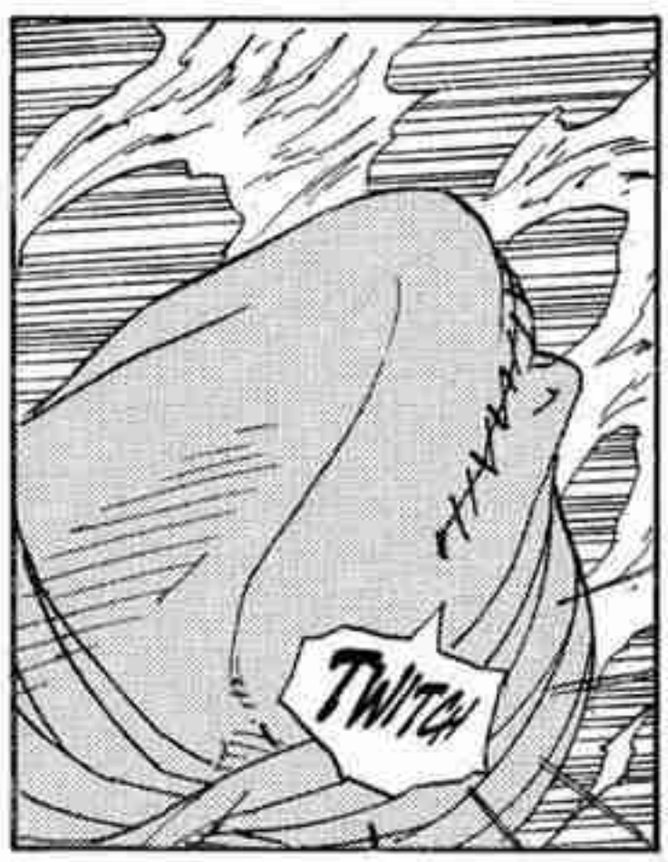
SHF

BUT... SINCE SHE CONTROLS THEM WITH HER FLUTE, THE MELODY MUST CONTAIN CERTAIN SOUND SEQUENCES THAT CONTROL EACH OF THEIR MOVEMENTS.

FINALE! NINTH PASSAGE ...!!
NO ONE SURVIVES THIS PIECE!
MAKYO NO RAN! DEMON REVOLU-TION!!

I STINK AT MUSIC!




TWITCH

TWITCH

TWITCH

SOME-THING'S COMING!!

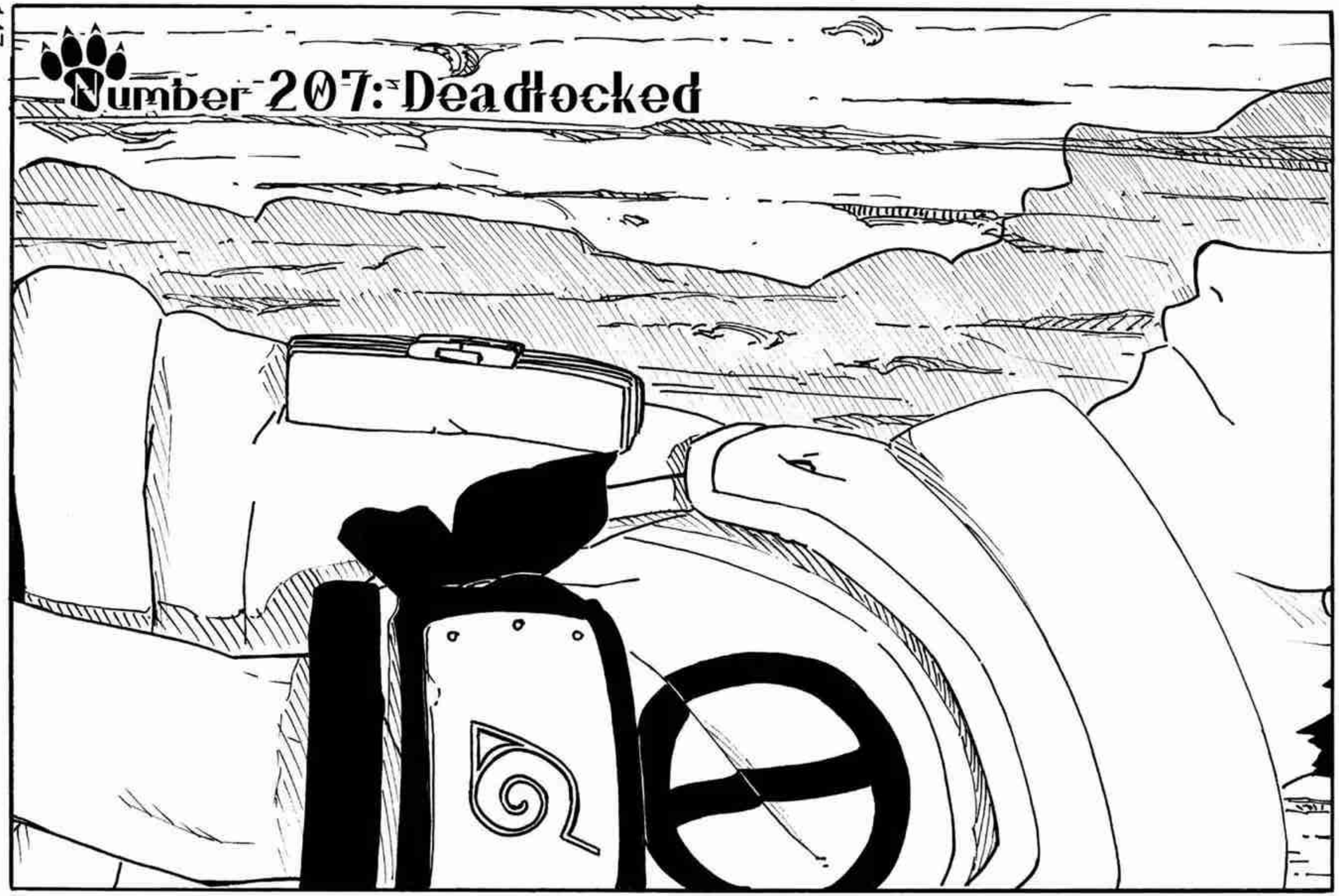
THE WORLD OF KISHIMOTO MASASHI
MY PERSONAL HISTORY: A STORY TOO EMBARRASSING TO WRITE DOWN, PART I

IT'S ABOUT TIME I ENDED WRITING MY PERSONAL HISTORY, BUT I'VE GOT NOTHING TO FILL OUT THIS BLANK PAGE WITH, SO I DECIDED TO CONTINUE WRITING A LITTLE BIT MORE. IT SEEMS THE MORE I WRITE, THE MORE I EMBARRASS MYSELF... BUT, I'M GOING TO WRITE AGAIN ANYWAY, AGAINST MY BETTER JUDGMENT. FIRST OF ALL, THIS STORY IS SO POINTLESS AND SILLY THAT I'VE AVOIDED WRITING IT UNTIL NOW, AND I'M NOT REALLY GUNG-HO ON WRITING IT NOW EITHER. BUT, AGAINST... MY...BETTER...JUDGMENT...

I THINK IT WAS WHEN I WAS IN THE FIRST GRADE. I WAS SO INTO THIS ONE SENTAI, SFX ACTION/ADVENTURE HERO SERIES. THE ONE I PLAYED MOST OFTEN AT THAT AGE WAS *TAIYO SENTAI SAN BARUKAN* (SOLAR SQUADRON SUN VULCAN). I USED TO PLAY SUN VULCAN FIGHTERS WITH MY FRIEND AND MY TWIN BROTHER A LOT. SUN VULCAN WAS A BIT DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHER SENTAI SERIES. WHILE MOST SENTAI SERIES HEROES WERE MADE UP OF A CELL OF FIVE, SUN VULCAN WAS BRAVE ENOUGH TO SAVE THE EARTH WITH A CELL OF THREE. THE CELL CONSISTED OF VULEAGLE, VULSHARK AND VULPANTHER.

I'VE NEVER LIKED BEING THE LEADER, EVER SINCE I WAS A KID. SO I DECIDED TO PLAY THE ROLES OF EITHER VULSHARK OR VULPANTHER, THE SECOND OR THIRD RANKED GUYS. BUT, BECAUSE VULSHARK'S POSE LOOKED LAME TO ME, EVEN AT THAT AGE, I DECIDED TO GO WITH VULPANTHER. ...ANYWAY... WELL... *UMM*... I REALLY GOT INTO THE VULPANTHER CHARACTER. OR, IT WAS MORE LIKE... I ALREADY WAS VULPANTHER. BASICALLY, I WAS INTOXICATED WITH VULPANTHER. HOW MUCH SO...? TO BE CONTINUED...

P.S. THE TRUTH SHALL BE REVEALED!


Number 207: Deadlocked

SMASH
SOME-THING'S COMING!

SKRITCH SKRITCH

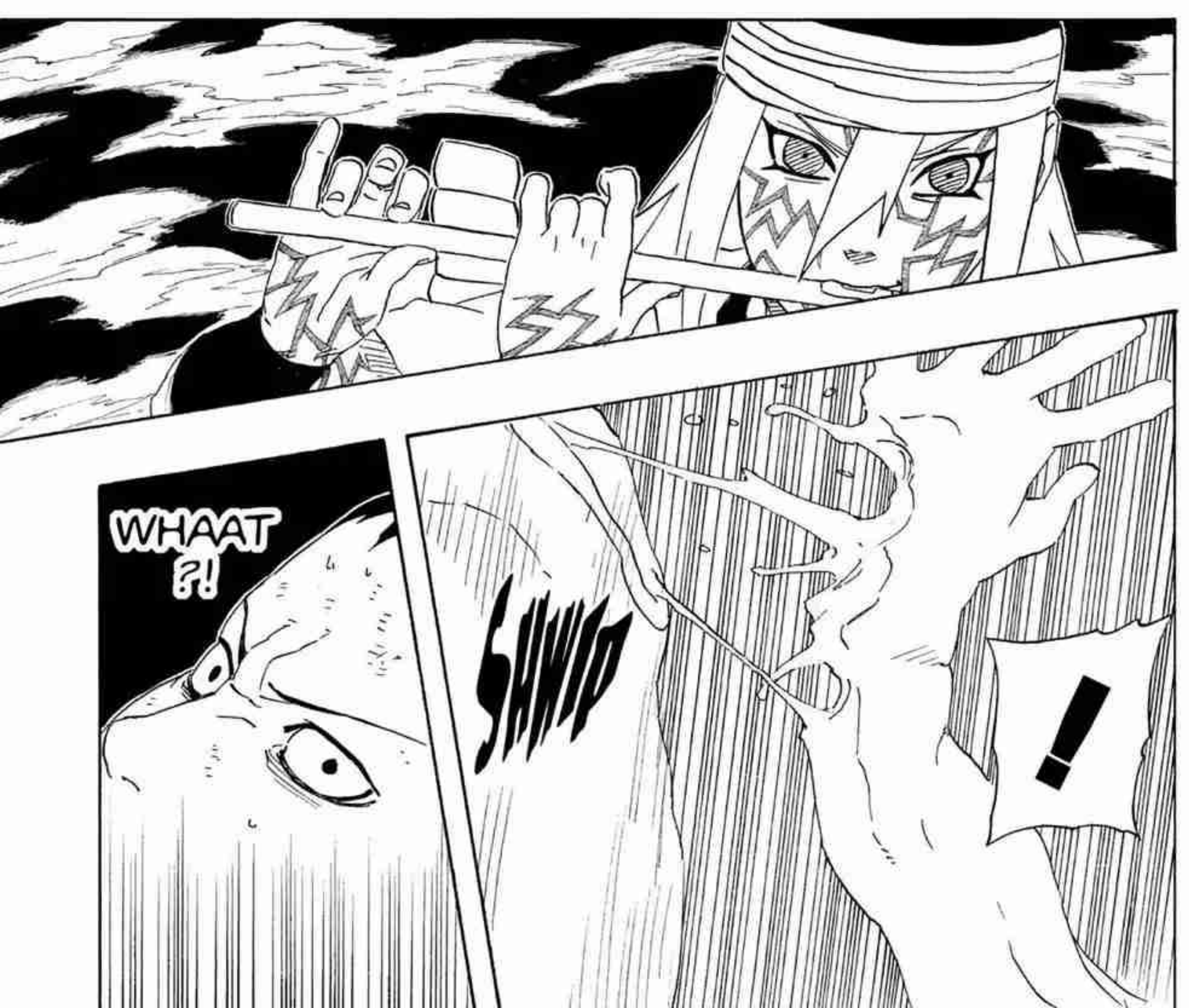
SKRITCH SKRITCH

SKRITCH SKRITCH

READ THIS WAY
SWEESH
SWEESH
SWEESH
SWEESH
SWEESH
SNAP
SNAP
SPING
SPING
SHWIP
SHWIP
SPING
WHAT?!
!!
FAK

ドガシャ
ヤムウェー

SHU UP
?!!
CHOMP


WHAAT ?!
SHWIP
!

TAK

FWIP

GUOOOK

TSK!!

CLINK

THEY'RE...

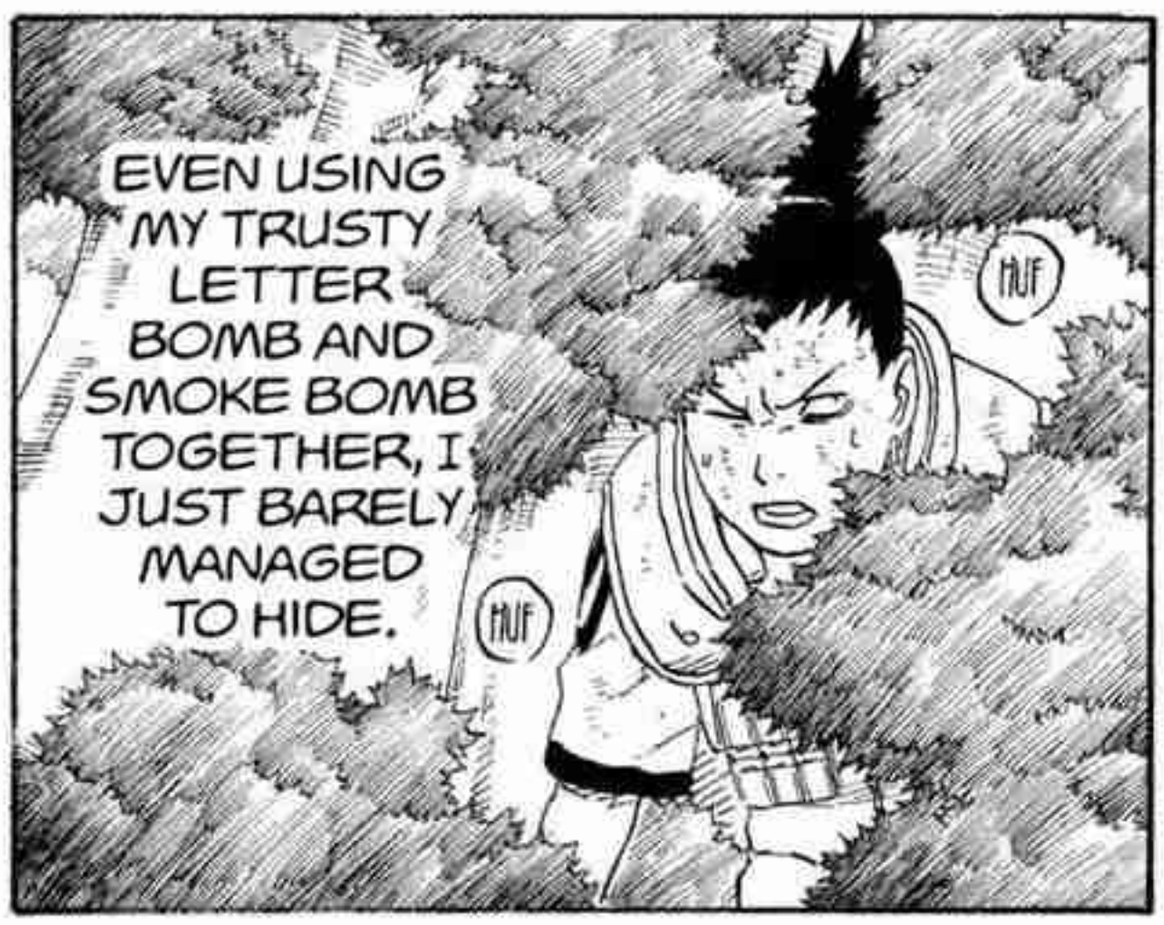
ZWIP

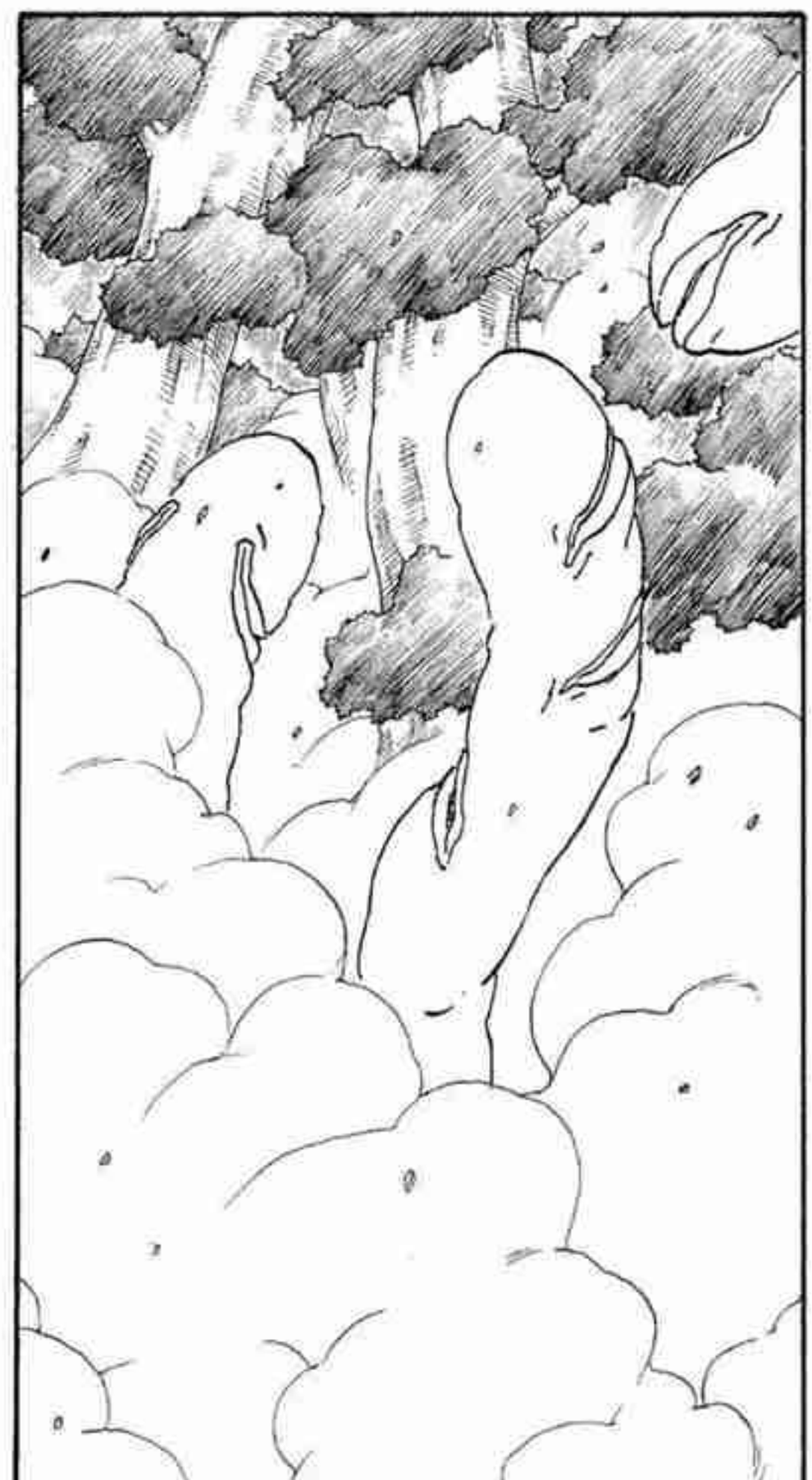
BOOF

爆

TAP

HE BOLTED ONCE HE REALIZED THE ENORMOUS POWER OF THE SPIRITS...HE'S SMARTER THAN I THOUGHT... BUT...



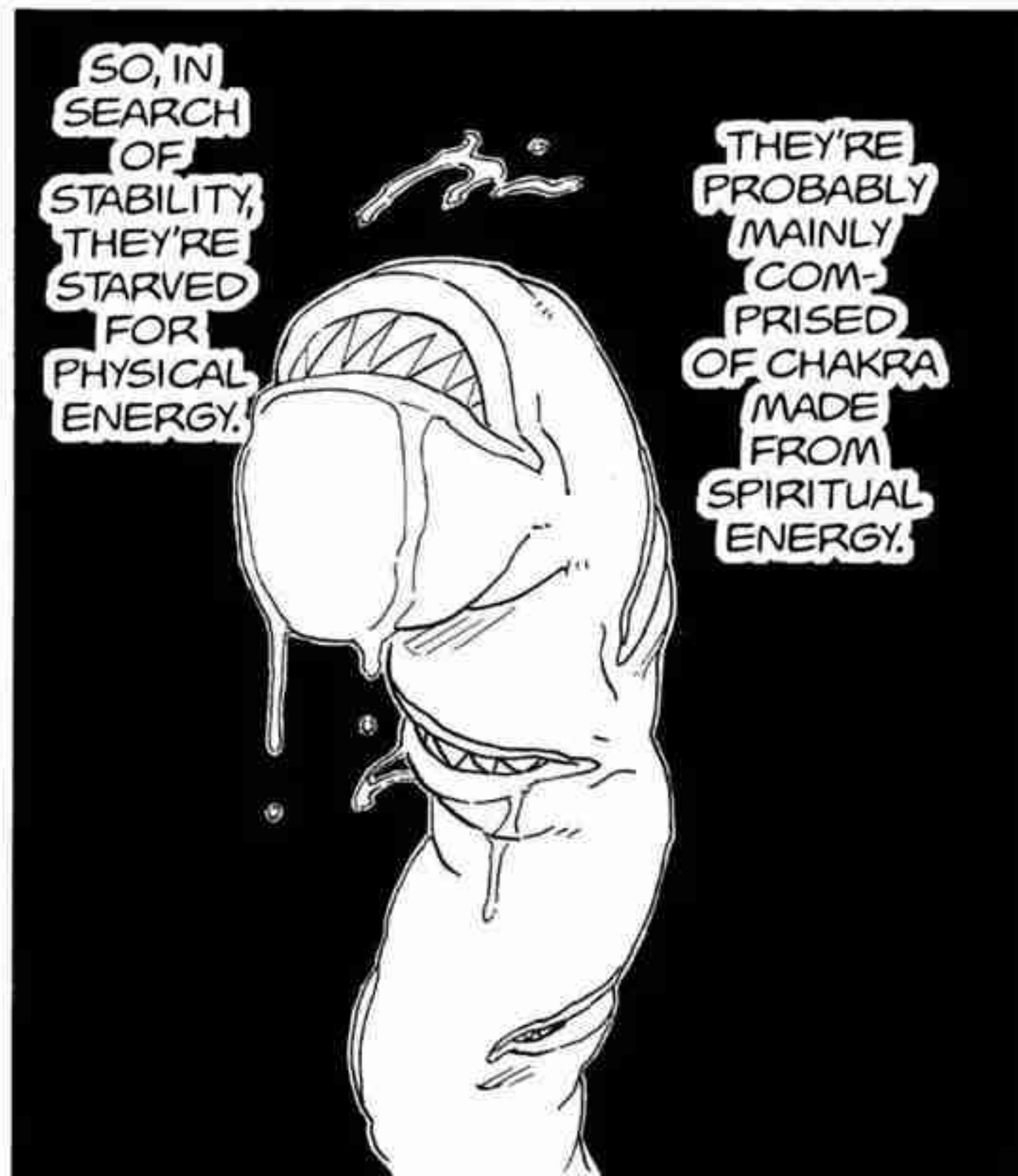


HUF
HUF

SHU UP
IT BIT OFF MY PHYSICAL ENERGY...
CHOMP
THAT WHITE THING...
?!!

...SEMI-SUBSTANCES. JUST CHAKRA WITH AN APPETITE.
FROM THE LOOKS OF WHERE MY SHURIKEN WENT IN, THEY MUST BE...

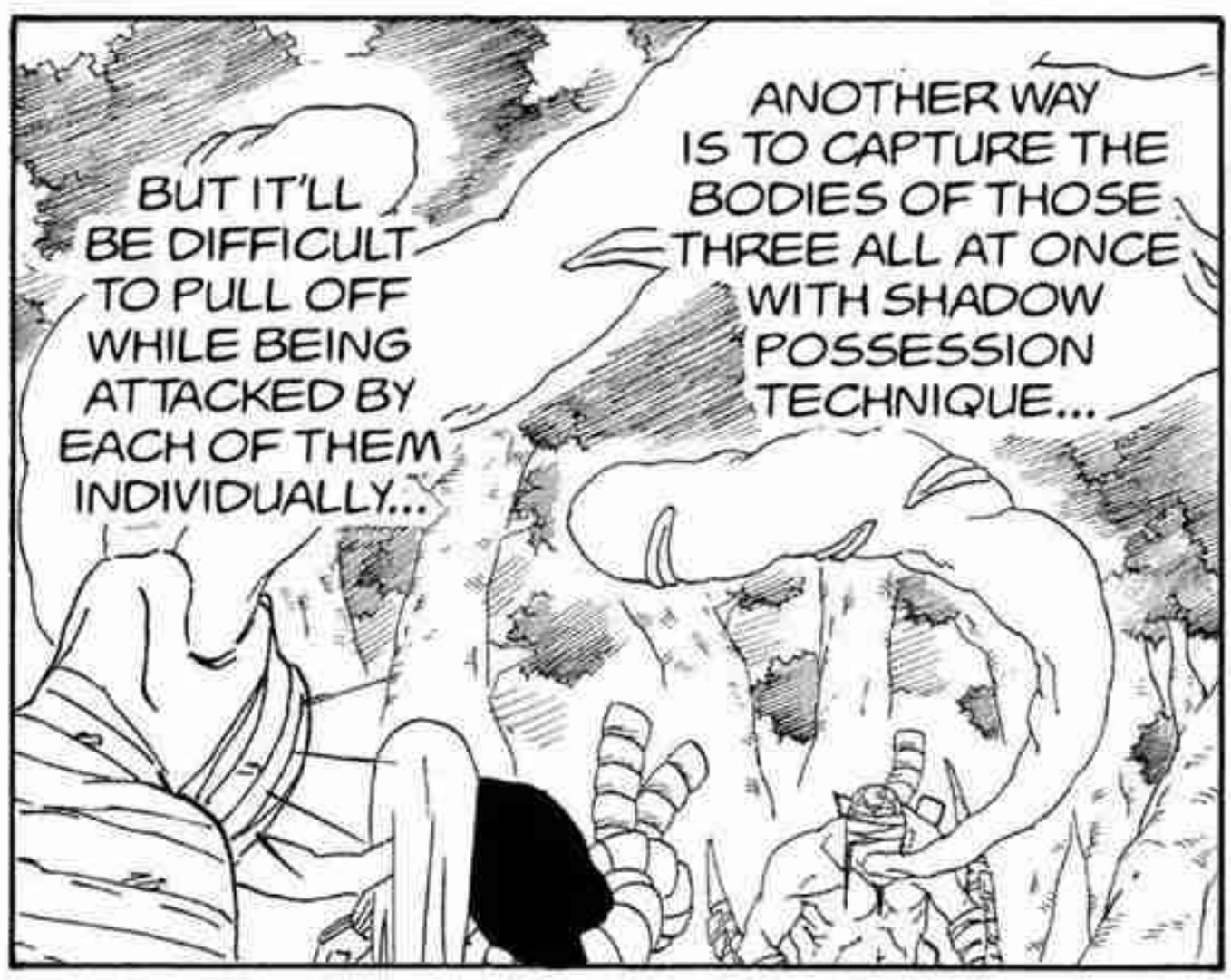
Twitch
Twitch
THESE ARE TROUBLE.
IF I KEEP TAKING ON HUNGRY CHAKRA LIKE THIS I WON'T BE ABLE TO USE MY OWN CHAKRA ANYMORE...


SO, IN SEARCH OF STABILITY, THEY'RE STARVED FOR PHYSICAL ENERGY.
THEY'RE PROBABLY MAINLY COMPRISED OF CHAKRA MADE FROM SPIRITUAL ENERGY.

BUT UNDER THESE CIRCUM-STANCES, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO GET NEAR HER.
THE QUICKEST WAY IS TO SILENCE THAT FLUTE, THOUGH.

I HAVE TO IGNORE THE WHITE THINGS AND AIM FOR THE MAIN BODIES.
A SHINOBI THAT MAKES SPECIAL CHAKRA LIKE ME... NO DOUBT IT'S A SECRET TECH-NIQUE.

IF I MISS EVEN ONE, I'LL GET ATTACKED FULL BLAST AND IT'S GAME OVER.


BUT IT'LL BE DIFFICULT TO PULL OFF WHILE BEING ATTACKED BY EACH OF THEM INDIVIDUALLY...
ANOTHER WAY IS TO CAPTURE THE BODIES OF THOSE THREE ALL AT ONCE WITH SHADOW POSSESSION TECHNIQUE...

ALL THE NINJA TOOLS I HAVE LEFT ARE 12 KUNAI KNIVES, NINE SHURIKEN, 12 METERS OF WIRE, ONE FLASH BOMB AND ONE LETTER BOMB...
...

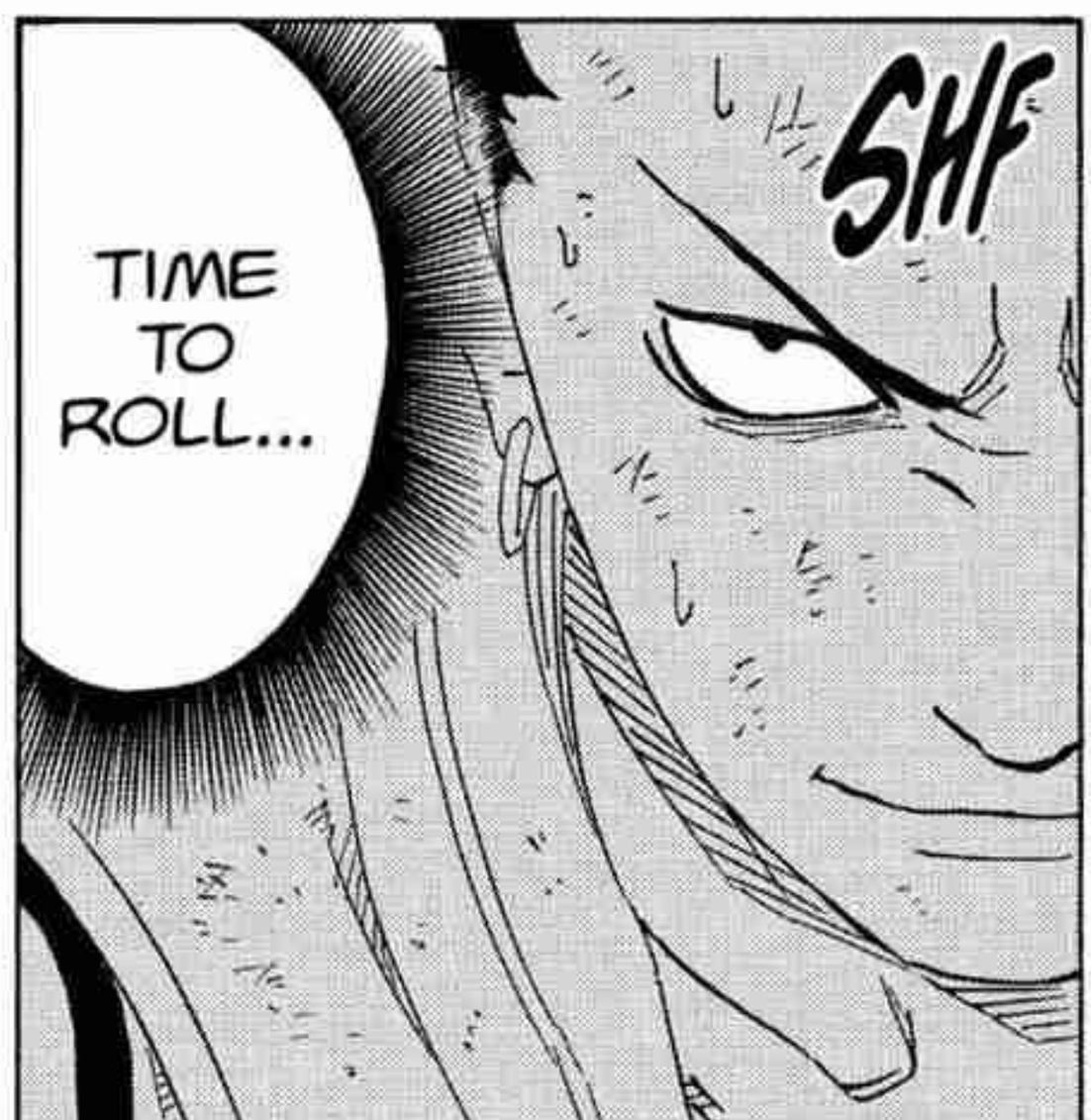
I BET SHE'S A CHESS-WHIZ.
SHE... LEAVES NO OPENINGS, OFFEN-SIVELY OR DEFEN-SIVELY.

MAN... I FEEL LIKE I'M PLAYING WITHOUT A ROOK OR A BISHOP.

SHF

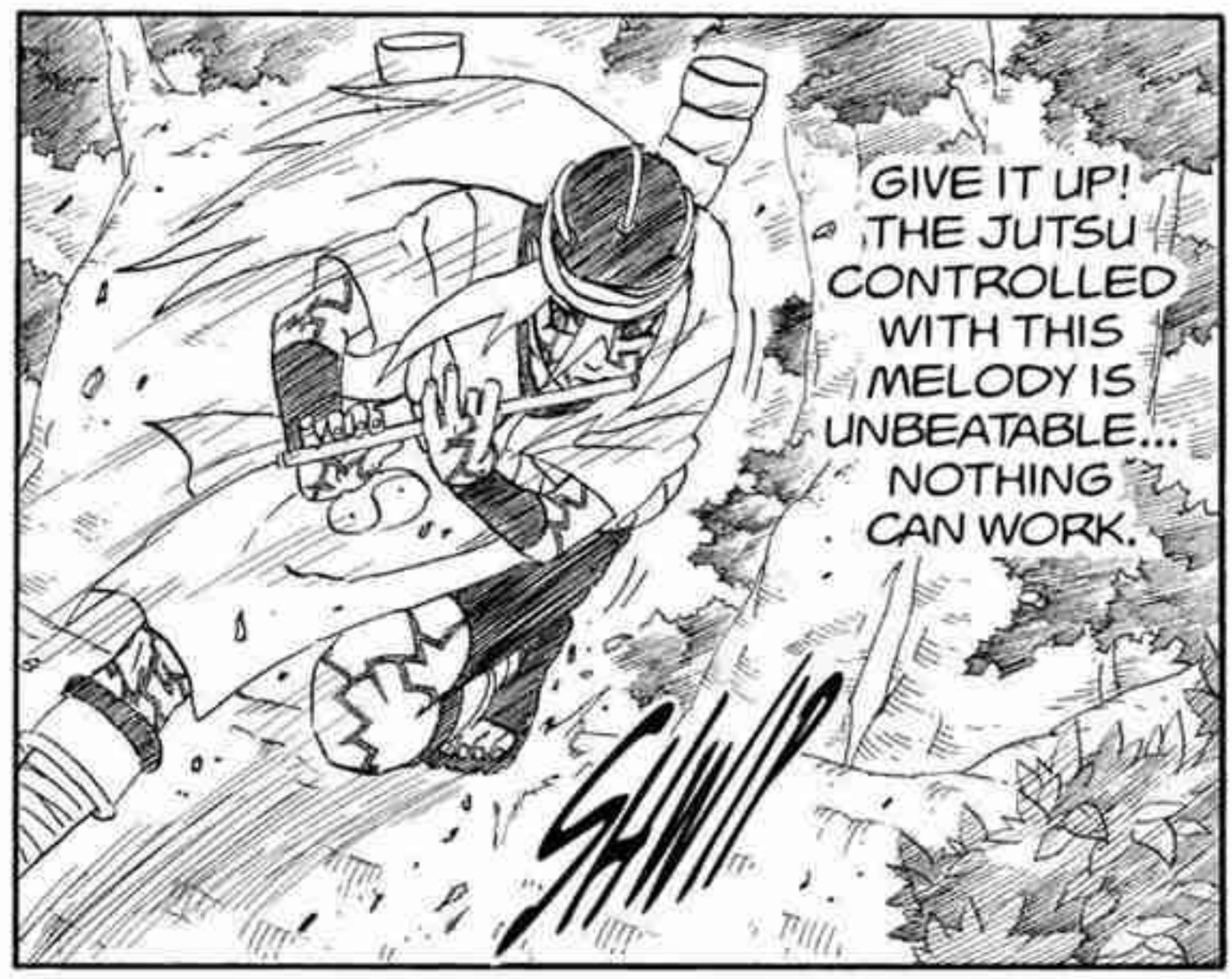
AS LONG AS HE CAN'T READ THEIR MOVEMENTS, HE HAS NOWHERE TO GO... I'LL FIND HIM AND FINISH HIM.

IT'S NO USE HIDING.



READ THIS WAY
ALL I GOTTA DO NOW IS GO FOR IT.
OKAY. ALL SET...
CHIK
SHOOP
TAK
THE TIME BETWEEN ATTACKS WILL MAKE OR BREAK THIS!
I HAVE NINE ATTACKS...
HOP
!
THUNK

BOOM


GIVE IT UP! THE JUTSU CONTROLLED WITH THIS MELODY IS UNBEATABLE... NOTHING CAN WORK.
SHIP

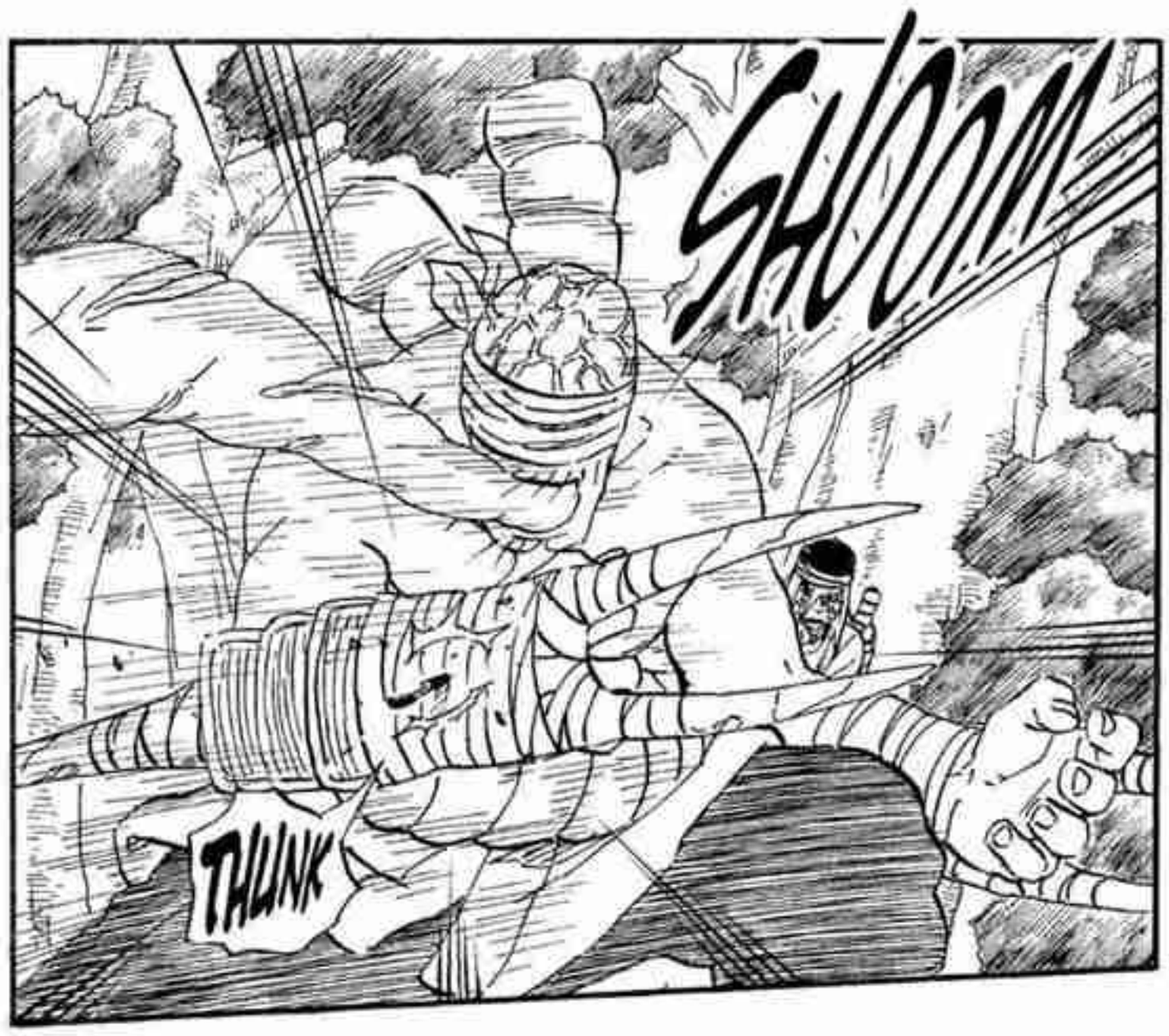
FWOOM

TWITCH

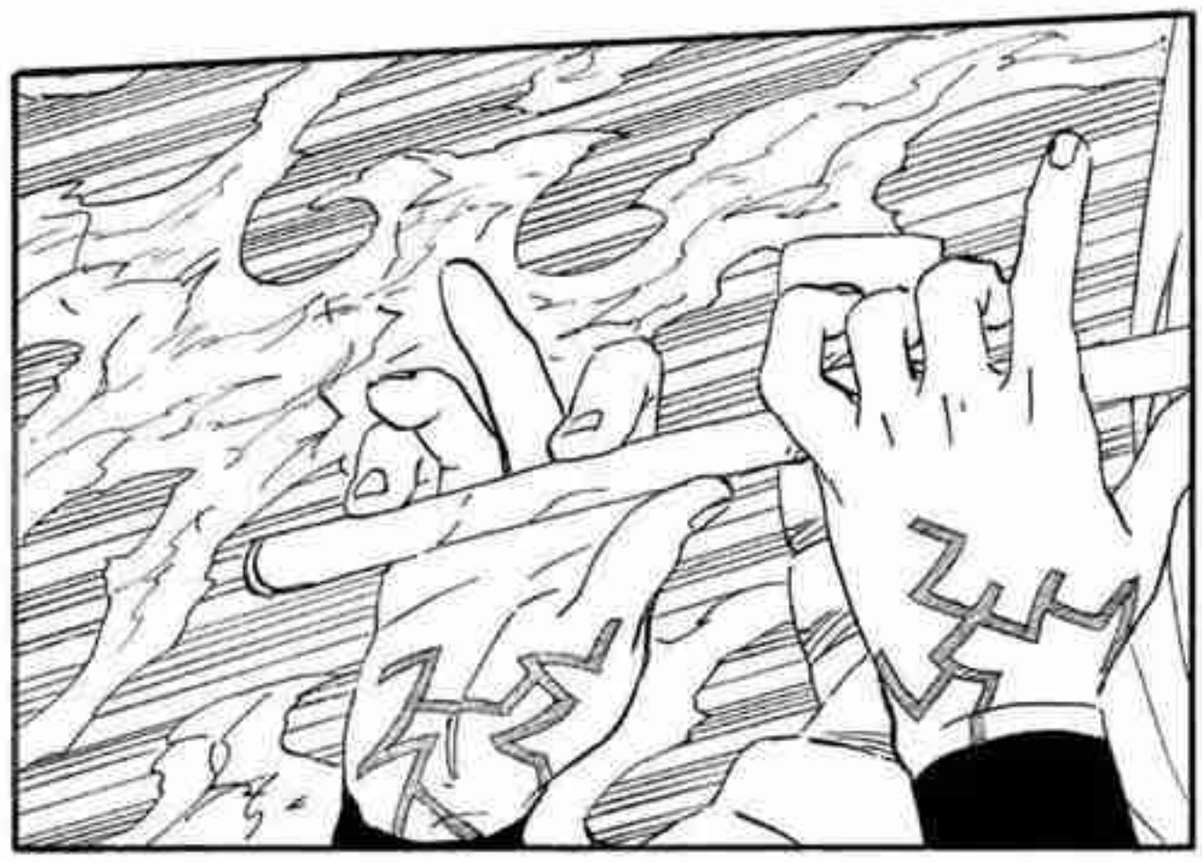
WHERE IS HE?!
QUIT SCAMPERING AROUND, YOU RAT!!

!!
SWISSH

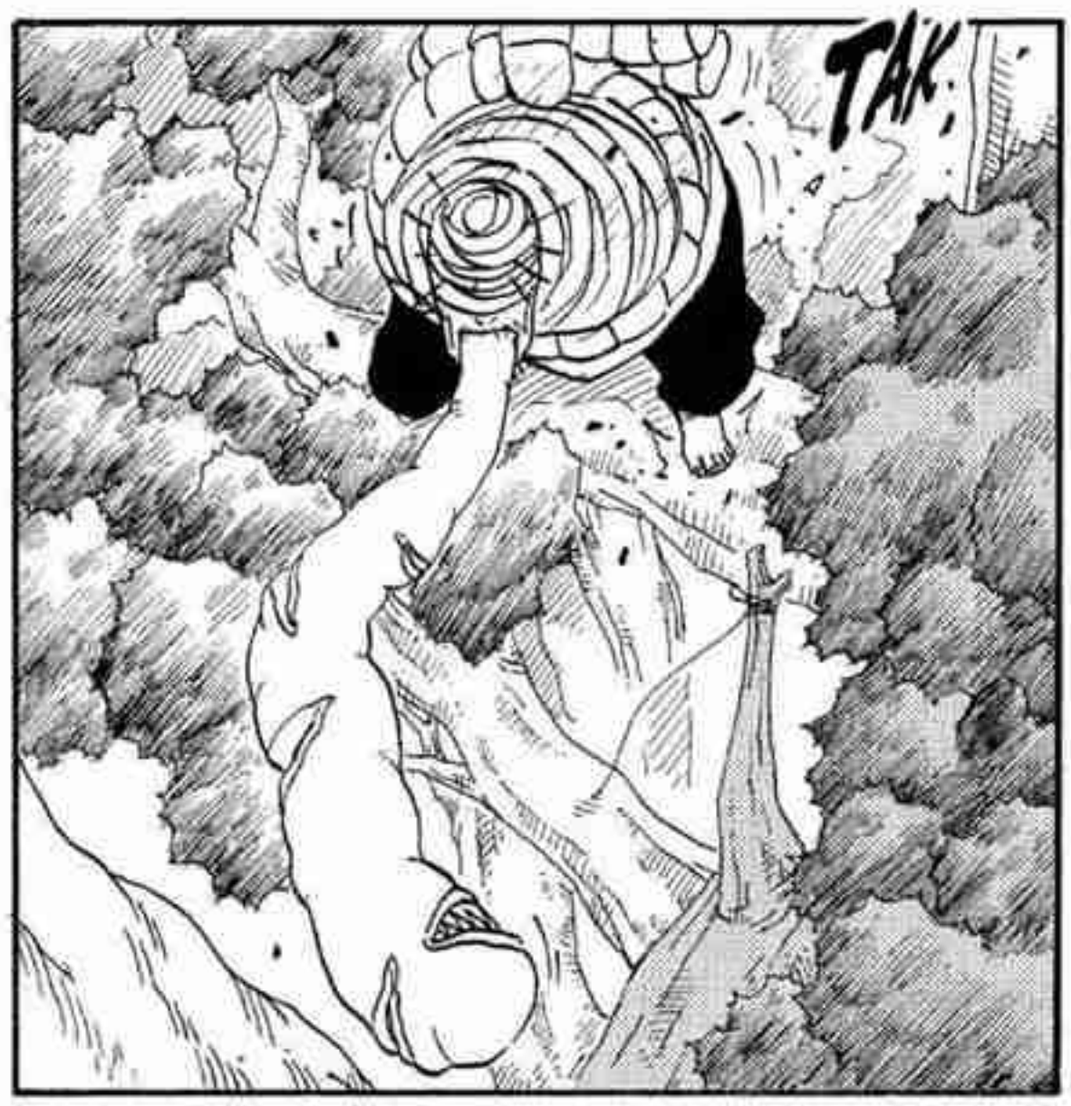
FWOOM


SHOOM
THUNK

OVER THERE!

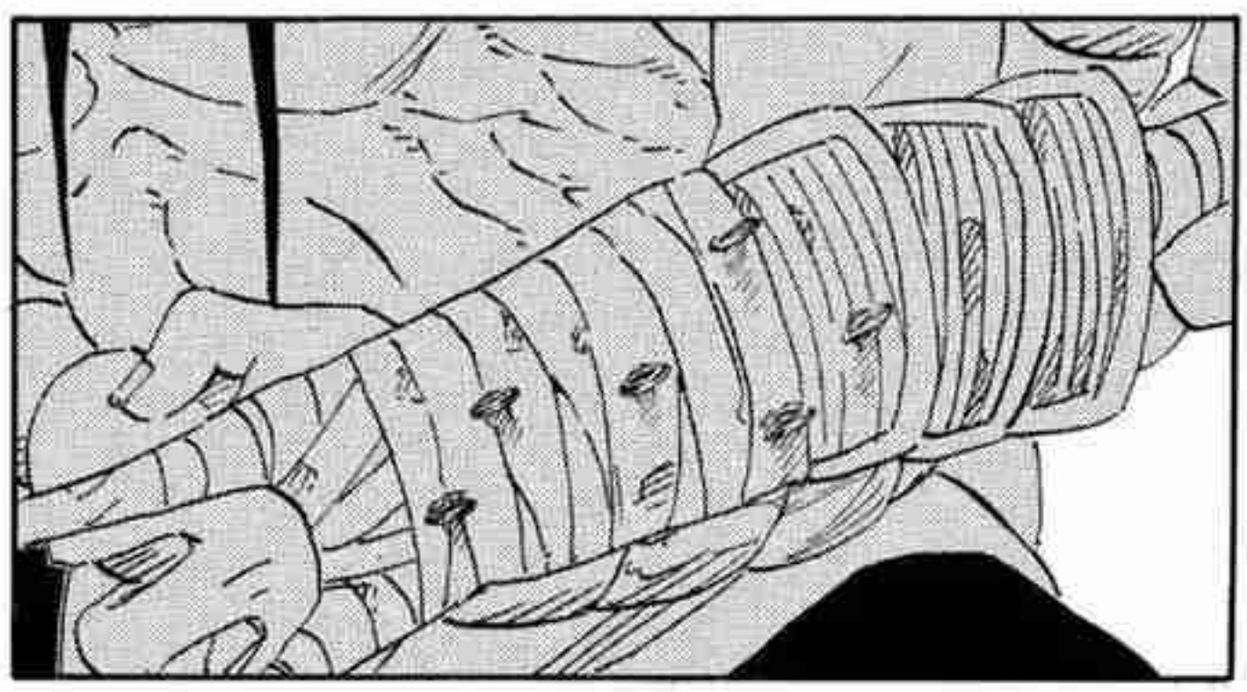


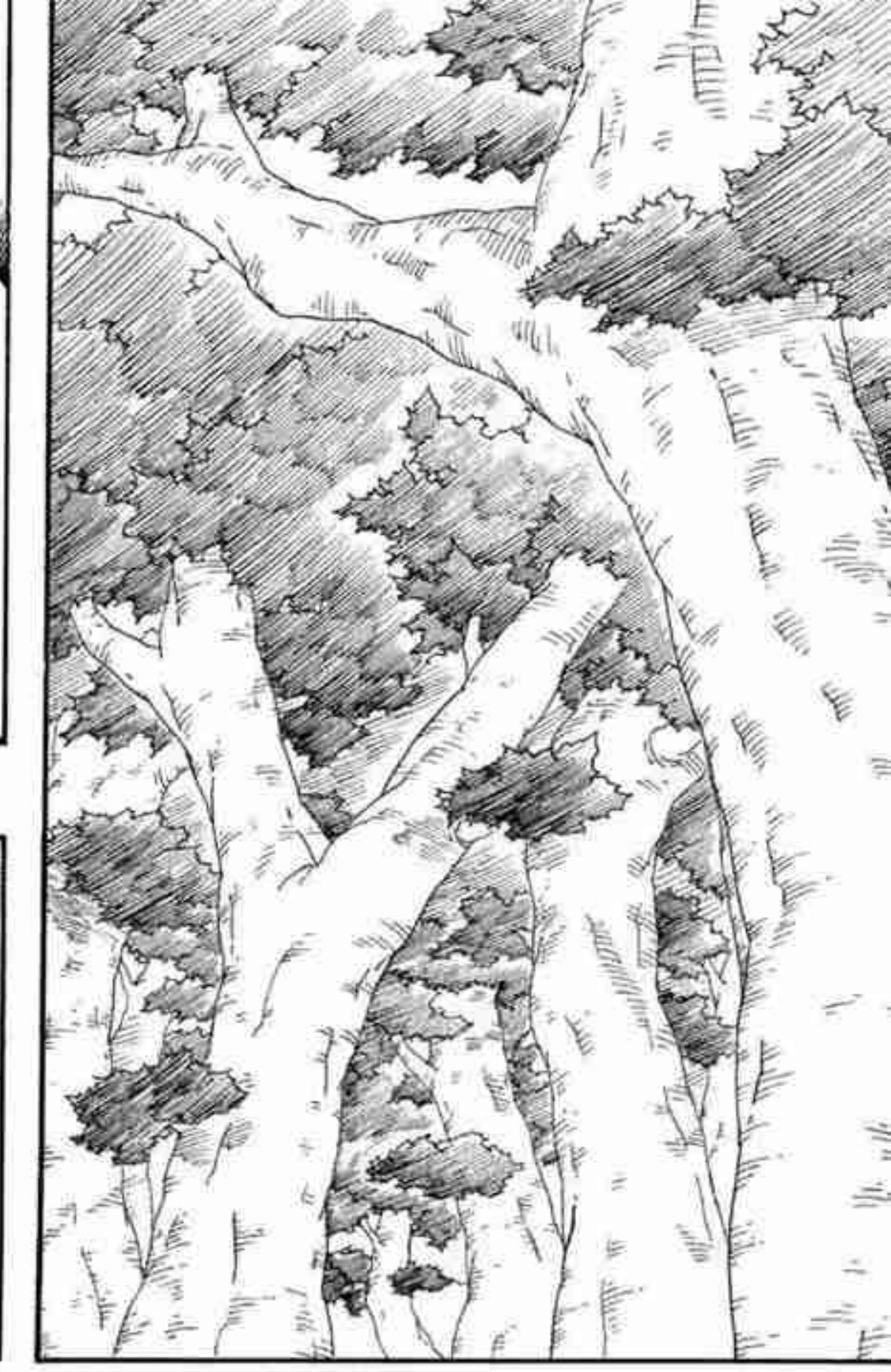
FWAA


TAK

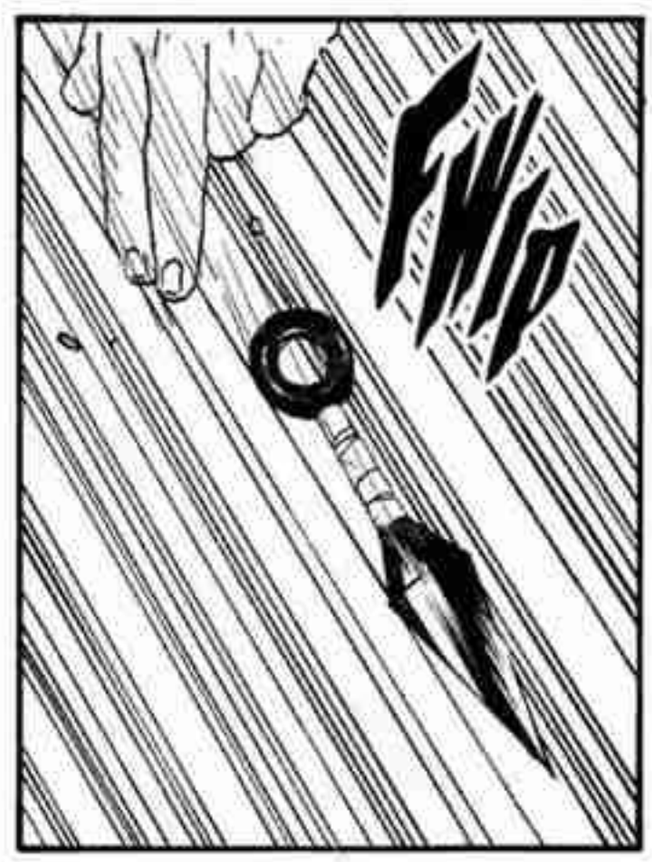
READ THIS WAY
SPING
SPING
SHF
STOP, MESSING AROUND!!
A PLOY TO CONCEAL HIS LOCATION...?!
TH
UNK
TSK!
SWISH
SWISH
SWISH
SWISH

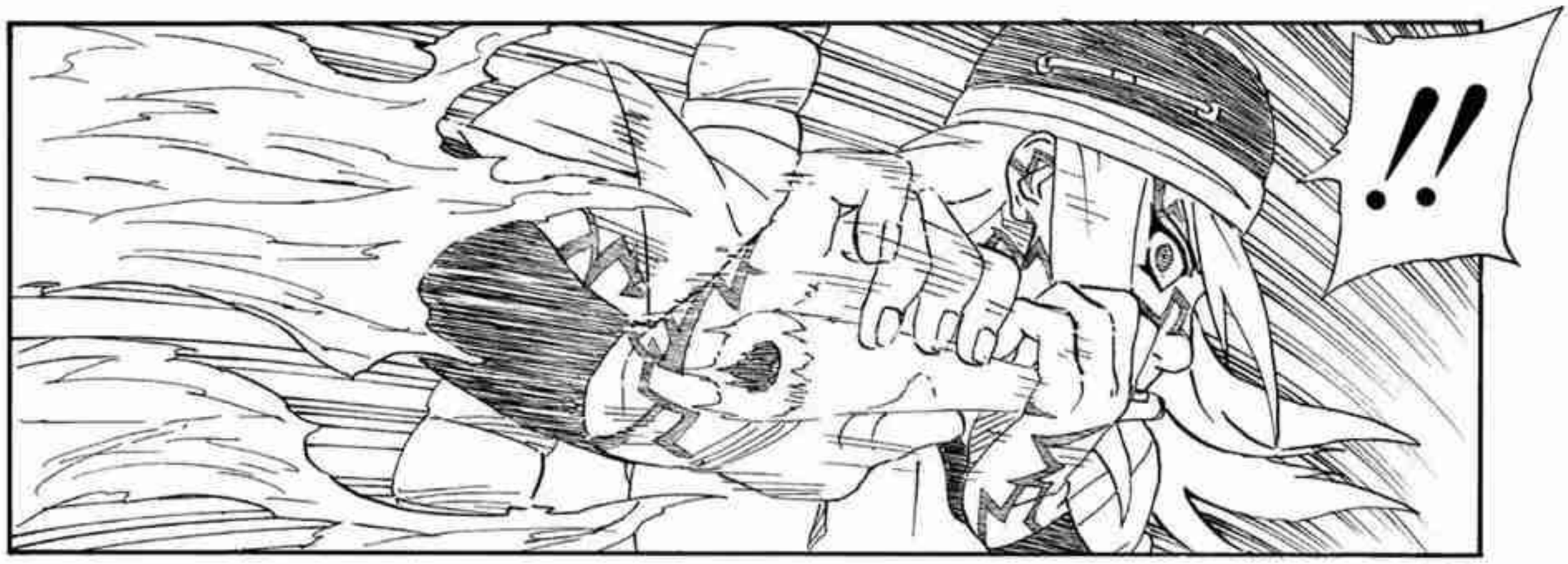
WHAT'S HE UP TO?!
SCURRYING LIKE THAT...





SHUK
THE MOST INTERESTING RULE IN CHESS IS...
TAK


FWIP


!!

PUSH!

SSH
...FLASH?!
?!

...ONCE YOU GET YOUR OPPONENT'S PAWNS, THEY BECOME YOURS TO COMMAND.

SWPT

OH, NO! HE'S USING THE LIGHT FROM THE FLASH TO EXTEND SHADOWS...

KAGEMANE NO JUTSU! SHADOW POSSESSION TECHNIQUE!!

YOUR FINGERS.

THE WORLD OF KISHIMOTO MASASHI
MY PERSONAL HISTORY: A STORY TOO EMBARRASSING TO WRITE DOWN, PART 2

FOR THE ALMOST ONE YEAR I DECIDED TO IDENTIFY MYSELF WITH VULPANTHER, I ENCOUNTERED MANY DIFFICULTIES. VULPANTHER IS YELLOW. BOTTOM LINE, HE'S SYMBOLIZED BY THE COLOR YELLOW! SO, WHENEVER I HAD TO CHOOSE A COLOR, I CHOSE YELLOW! ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING HAD TO BE YELLOW!

VULPANTHER WORE A YELLOW JACKET SO, OF COURSE, I WORE YELLOW CLOTHES. BUT... THE YELLOW CLOTHES LOOKED WORSE THAN I THOUGHT.

VULPANTHER IS [SYMBOLIZED BY] CURRY. BOTTOM LINE, HE LOVES CURRY AND RICE! SO, EVERY TIME SOMEONE ASKED ME, "WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE FOOD?" OF COURSE I ANSWERED "CURRY AND RICE!" ... FOR SOME REASON, IN THIS KIND OF SENTAI SERIES, MANY CHARACTERS WHOSE SYMBOLIC COLOR WAS YELLOW LIKED CURRY AND RICE. THE YELLOW RANGER OF THE GO RANGERS (MIGHTY MORPHIN POWER RANGERS IN ENGLISH) WAS NO EXCEPTION.

VULPANTHER IS A CHARACTER THAT EATS TONS OF CURRY AND RICE AND ALWAYS ASKS FOR SECONDS. HE PILES UP PLATES ONE AFTER ANOTHER, EATING AS FAST AS WANKO SOBA SPEED-EATERS. AS FAR AS I CAN REMEMBER, HE WOULD PILE UP ABOUT 20 PLATES. BASICALLY, ONE LOOK AT HIM REVEALED CLEARLY THAT HE LOVED CURRY AND RICE.

SO YOU CAN IMAGINE HOW EXCITED I GOT ON DAYS WHEN CURRY AND RICE WAS SERVED FOR DINNER!! A WANNABE VULPANTHER DEFINITELY HAD TO ASK FOR SECONDS NO MATTER WHAT, EVEN WHEN HE FELT LIKE THROWING UP OR THAT HIS STOMACH WAS GOING TO BURST. THEN I WOULD SAY TO MY MOTHER, "SECONDS, PLEASE! NEXT PLATE!" MY MOTHER WOULD SAY, "...? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?! IF YOU WANT SECONDS, PUT IT ON THE SAME PLATE YOU HAVE NOW!! NO NEED TO DIRTY ANOTHER PLATE!!" I THOUGHT, "...CAN'T ARGUE WITH THAT..."

VULPANTHER ALSO CLIMBS WALLS. HE HAS SHARP CLAWS AND CAN CLIMB NO MATTER WHAT, EVEN IF THE WALL IS PERPENDICULAR TO THE GROUND! OF COURSE, I HAD TO CLIMB ANY PERPENDICULAR WALL I SAW WHEN PLAYING SUN VULCAN. ...EVEN I, AS A FIRST GRADER, KNEW THAT NO ONE COULD CLIMB A PERPENDICULAR WALL. BUT, IN FRONT OF VULEAGLE AND VULSHARK, I HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO GO FOR IT. AS I RAN TOWARD THE WALL, I THOUGHT, "...HONESTLY, PLAYING VULPANTHER IS TOUGH..." JUMP!! AND SPLAT, I FLATTENED MYSELF AGAINST THAT WALL! SCRATCH! "OUCH!!" ...MY FINGERNAILS GOT TORN OFF. ...FROM THAT DAY FORWARD, I QUIT PLAYING VULPANTHER.

Number 208: Fake-Out!!

IT CAN'T BE!!

HE READ THEIR MOVES... BY MEMORIZING MY FINGER MOVE-MENTS...?

READ THIS WAY
...I CAREFULLY EXAMINED THE MOVEMENTS OF EACH OF YOUR FINGERS AND THOSE THREE...
THAT'S HOW I WAS ABLE TO ANALYZE AND MEMORIZE THEM.
WHILE YOU WERE BUSY DODGING MY ATTACK AND SEARCHING FOR ME...
...THE GUY IN THE MIDDLE BENDS FORWARD.
AND YOUR LEFT MIDDLE FINGER AND PINKY. WITH THE MELODY THOSE FINGERS PLAY...
SQUISH
SQUISH
SQUISH
SQUISH
SHIF
UGH.
...TSK...
THEY'RE BOUND WITH MY SHADOW POSSESSION TECHNIQUE.
IT'S USE-LESS.

...

SHUF

NOW FOR SOME HARD-CORE CHESS.

SNIK

HMPH.

SHLUCK

IT'S MY TURN TO CORNER YOU WITH MY PAWNS.

I TOLD YOU NO ONE'S EVER SURVIVED HEARING MY FLUTE, STUPID!!

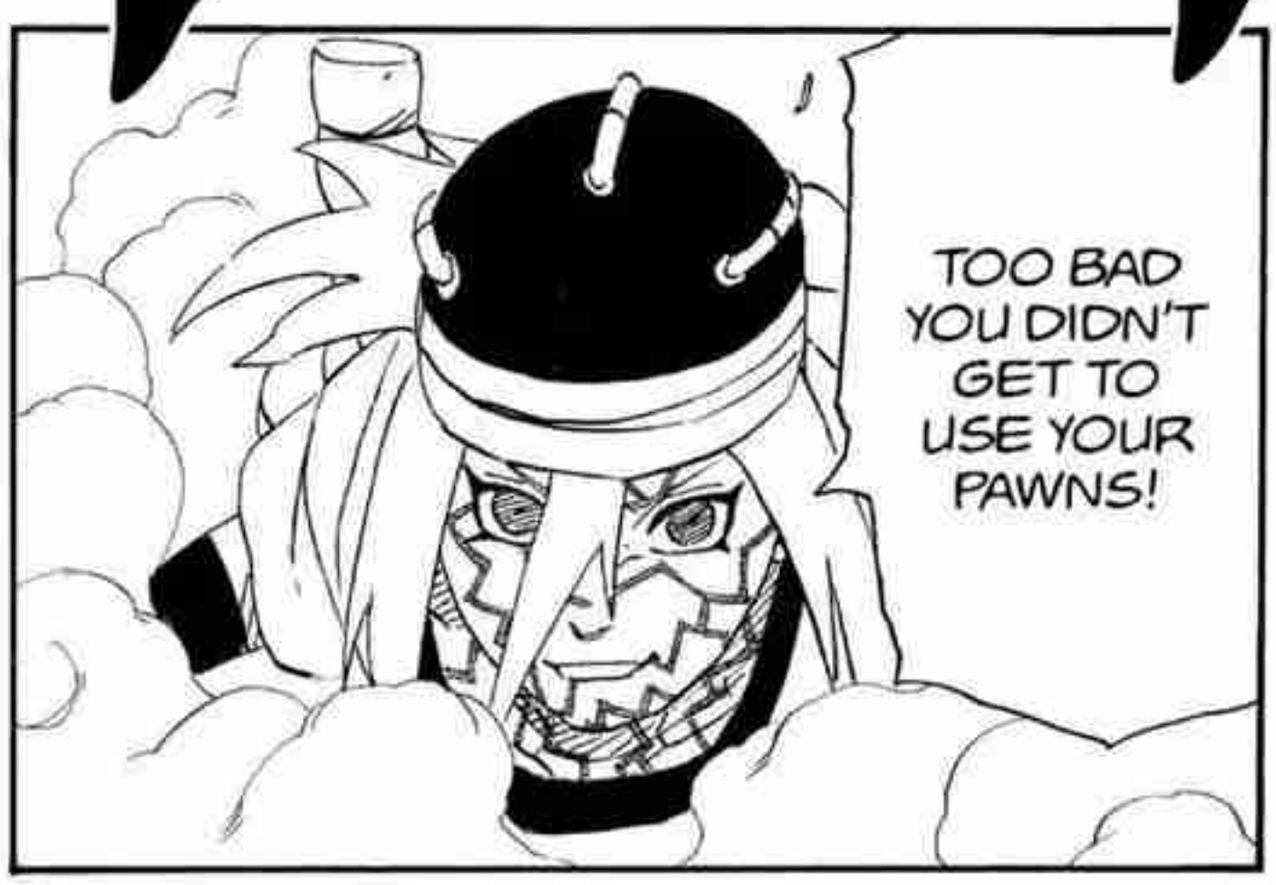
THE FLUTE IS MY ONLY WEAPON!

AT LEAST ARM YOURSELF WITH A KUNAI KNIFE...

WHY SO RELAXED?

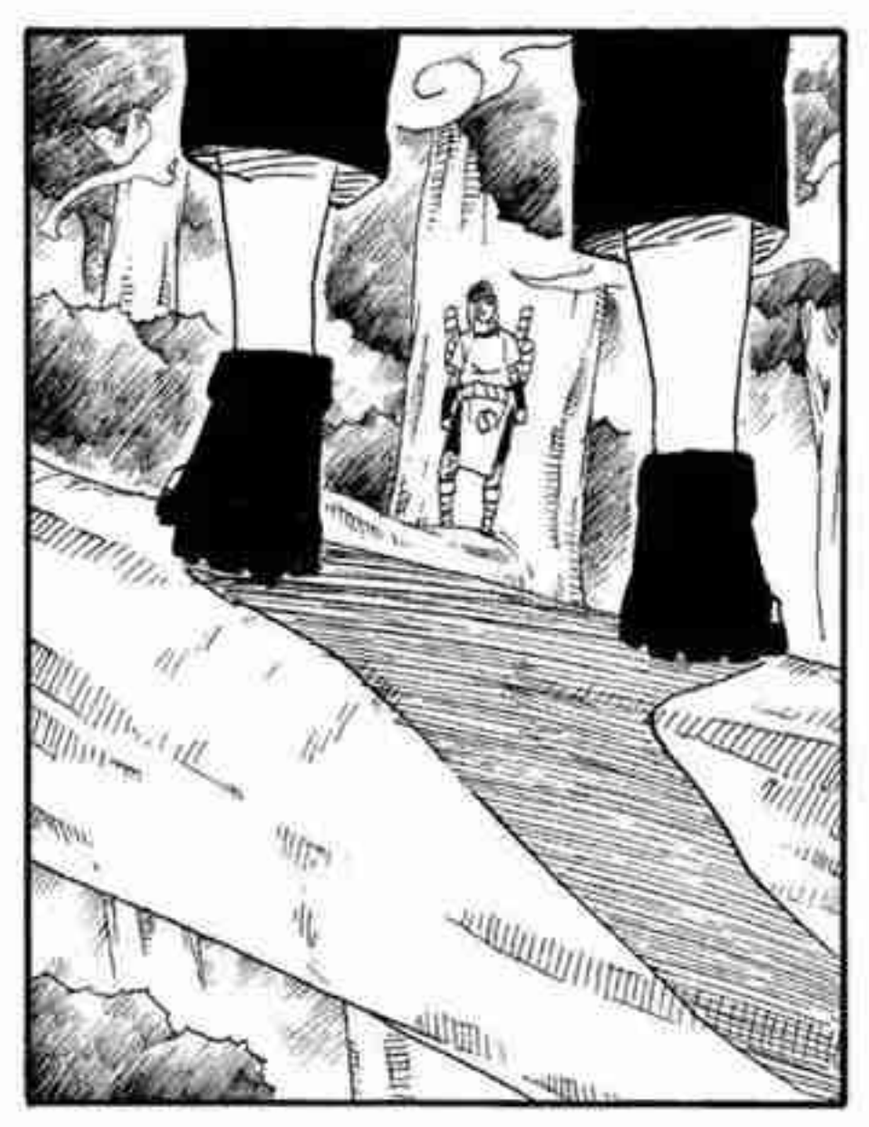
READ THIS WAY
FOOSH
SKF
PRETTY CONFI-DENT, HUH?
TAI! DISPEL!!

BOOF BOOF BOOF

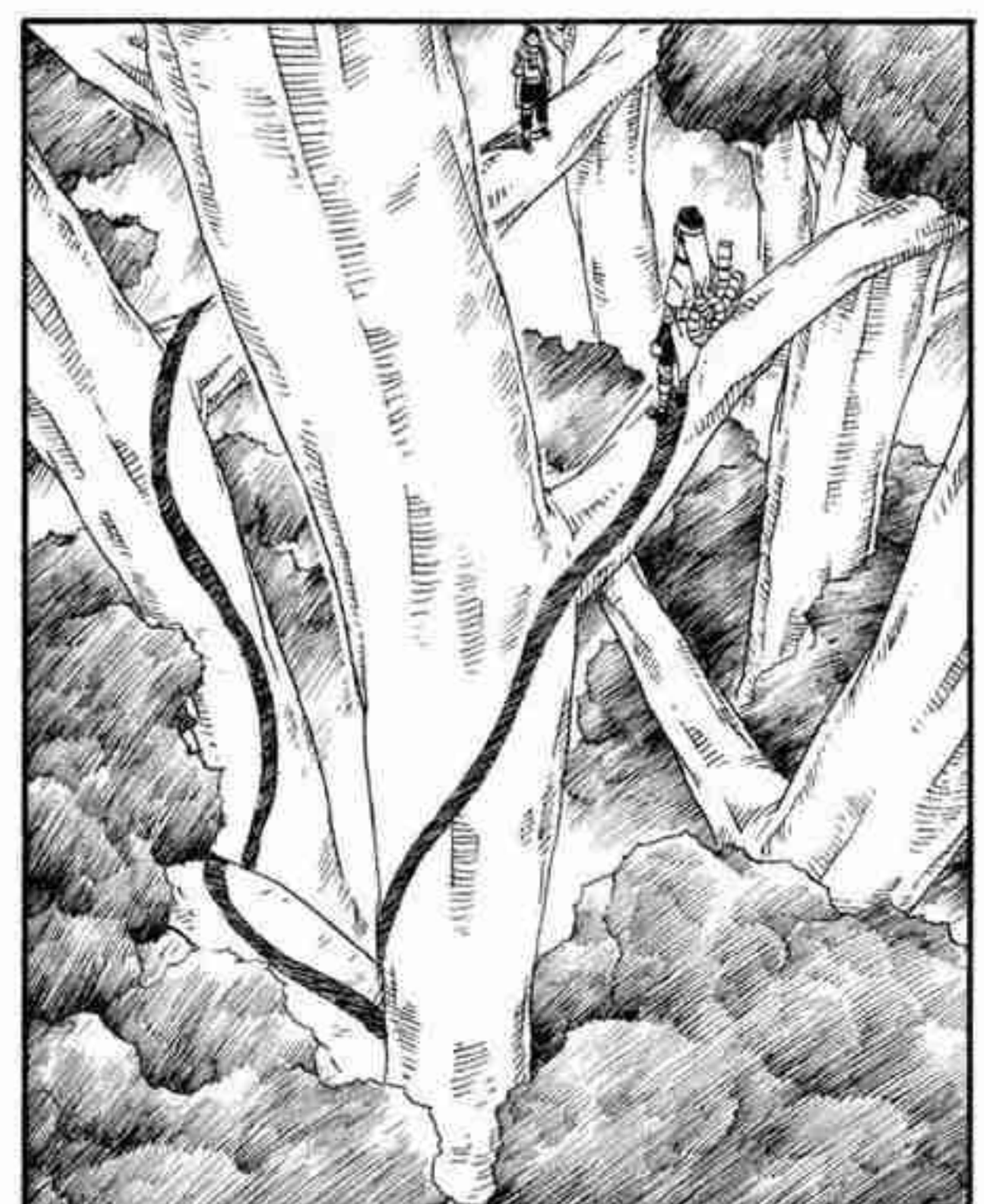


WHAT ?!

?!
GAH



SHADOW POSSES-SION! SUCCESS!!

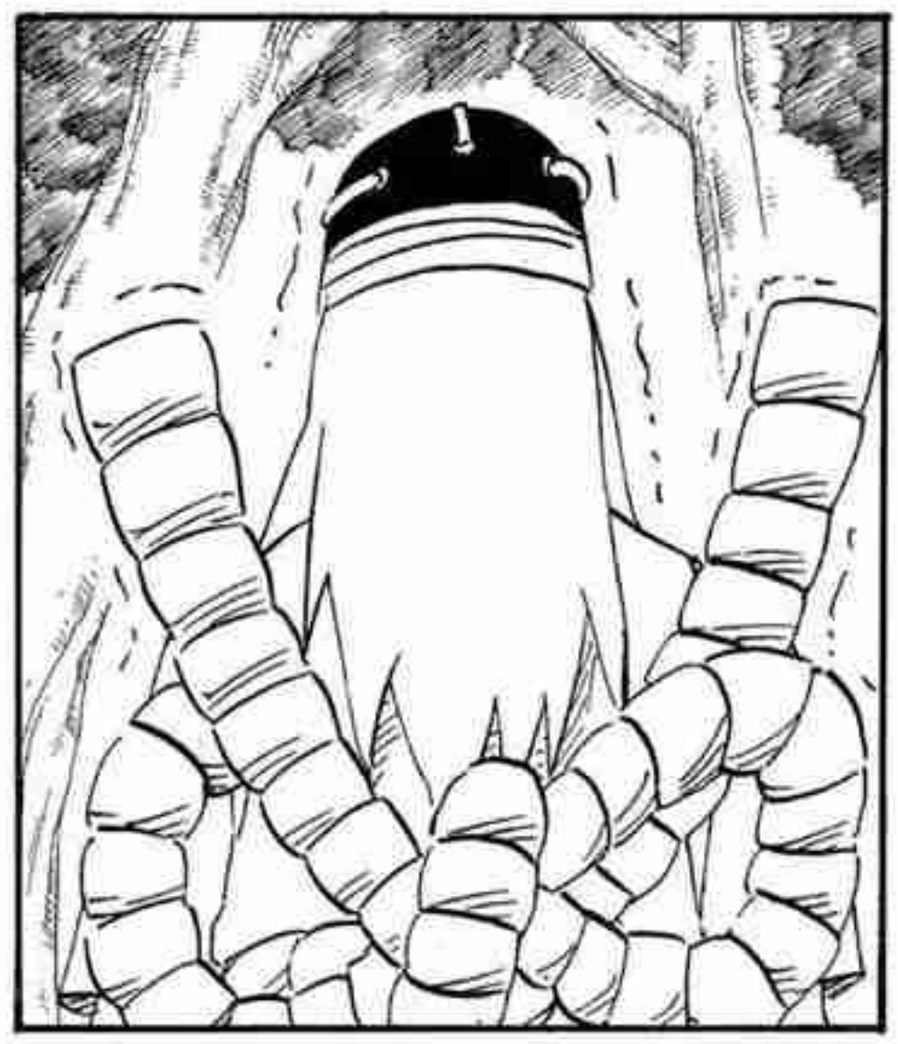


THEY WERE ONLY DECOYS.

I TOLD YOU I'D CORNER YOU WITH MY PAWNS.

AND THE SECOND MOVE HITS THE TARGET. BASIC STRATEGY, GET IT?

THE FIRST MOVE IS A FAKE-OUT.



NEVER THOUGHT I'D USE SECOND STATE HERE.

FFM

I... GOTTA TAKE HIM DOWN BY FORCE.

FF

MM

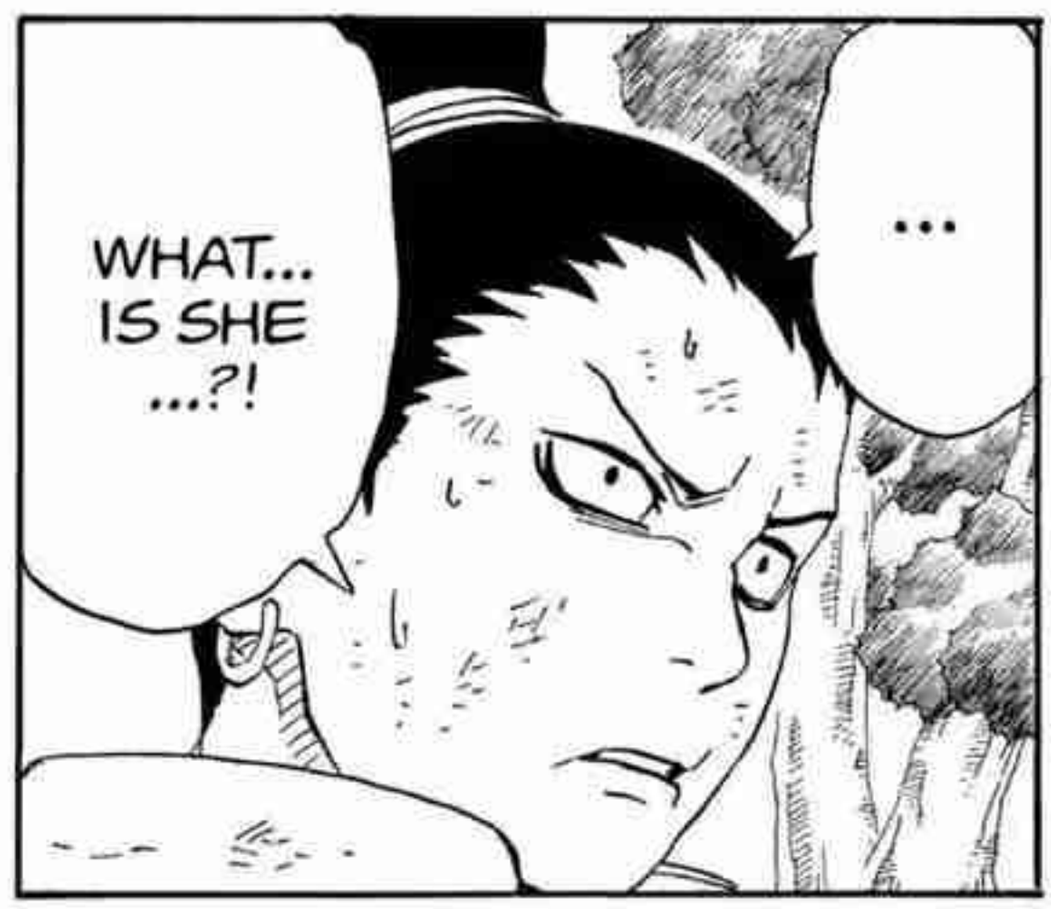
FUMP

...THIS LITTLE PUNK IS GOOD.

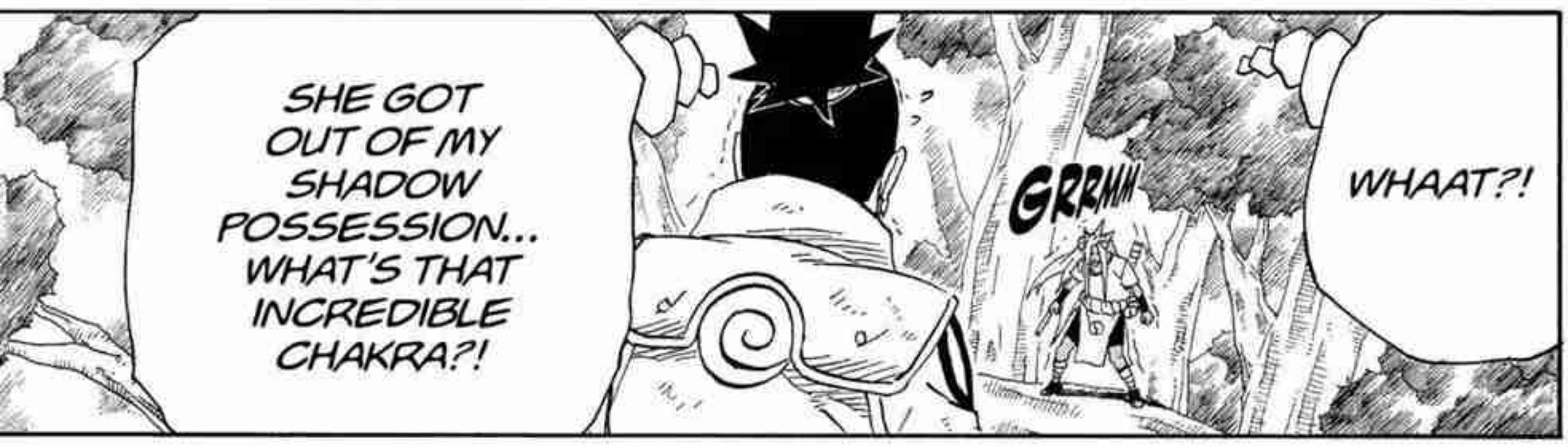
I HATE TO ADMIT IT... BUT I GOTTA HAND IT TO HIM...

SHOOOO

FROM HERE ON, THINGS WILL NOT GO ACCORDING TO YOUR PLAN!
YOU'RE SMART, BUT...
SHIVER
TWITCH
TWITCH


WHAT... IS SHE ...?!
...

GULP
?!


SHE GOT OUT OF MY SHADOW POSSESSION... WHAT'S THAT INCREDIBLE CHAKRA?!
GRRMM
WHAAT?!

HAVE TO USE THAT TECH-NIQUE ...
FWIP
FWIP

SHE CAN'T GET AWAY...! NO MORE CONSERV-ING CHAKRA ...!!
SHE BROKE MY TECH-NIQUE.
TOK

KAGE KUBISHIBARI NO JUTSU! ART OF SUFFOCATING DARKNESS!!

THE SHADOW'S PUTTING PRESSURE ON ME DIRECTLY... IT FEELS LIKE REAL HANDS... BUT...

THIS ISN'T THE SAME JUTSU!

SHF

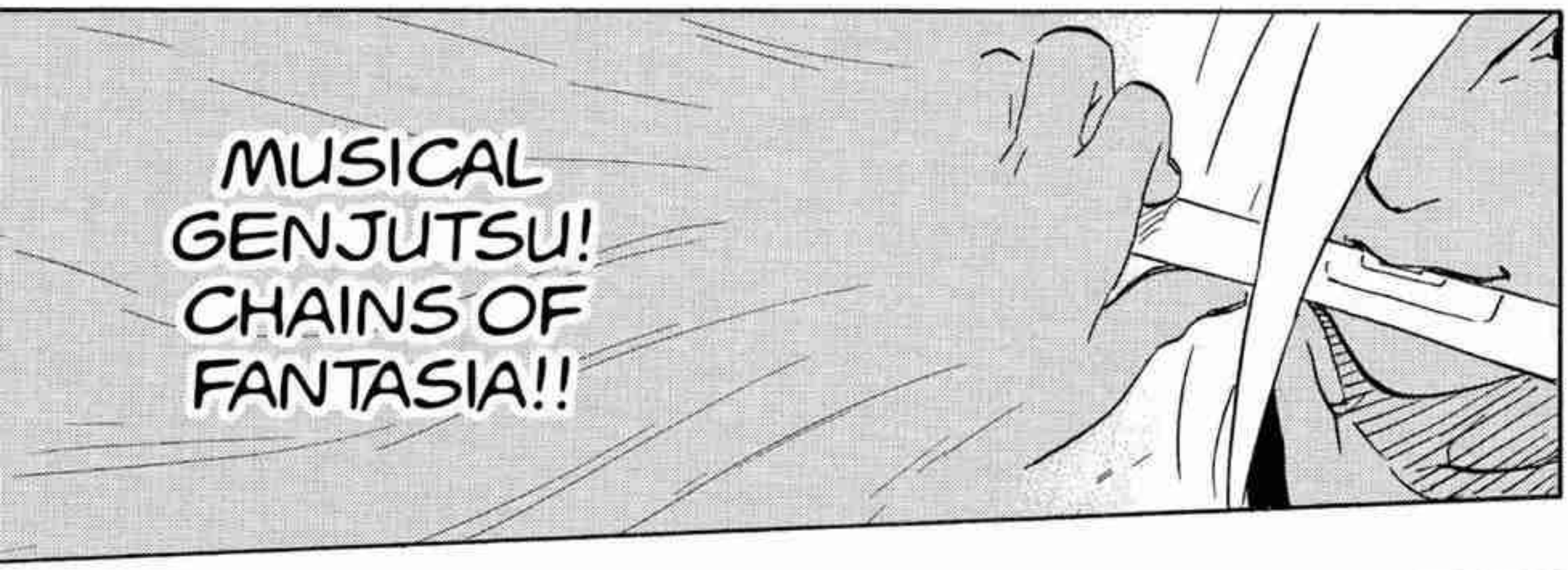
?!!

SHOOO

GRRR

TAKE THIS...
WHT

AT THIS DISTANCE... THIS FORCE WILL BREAK MY JUTSU.
ACK... WHAT STRENGTH!!
SHLUGK


MUSICAL GENJUTSU! CHAINS OF FANTASIA!!

...
GLARE

GENJUTSU?!

WHOA! IS THIS...
!!
TWITCH

UGH...
THUNK

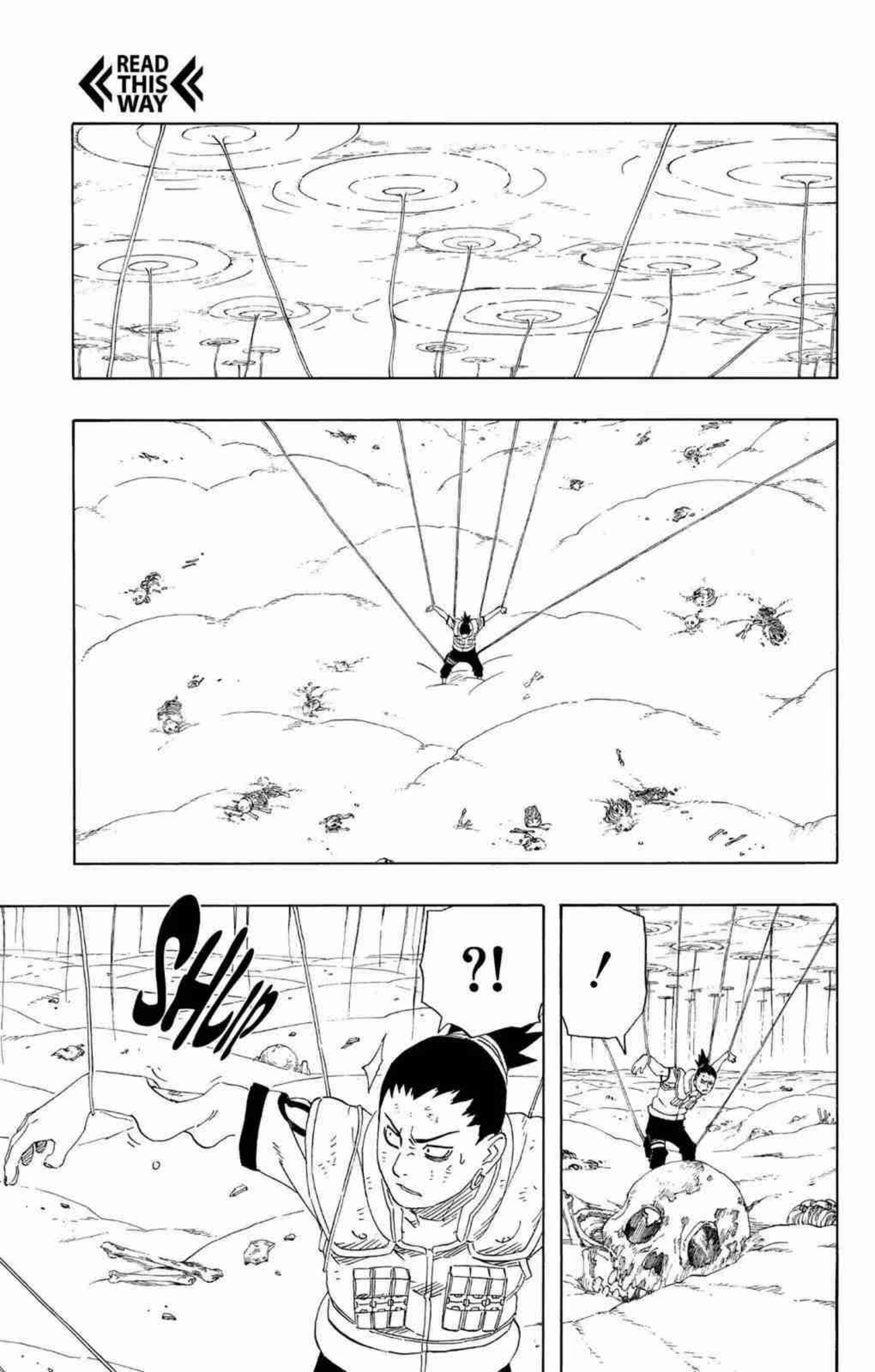
TWITCH
SHWP

SHWIP
SWHOO

HMPH... WHAT'RE YOU AIMING FOR?
SHOO

...
TWITCH

TWITCH
TWITCH
UGH... I CAN'T MOVE...


READ THIS WAY
!
?!
SHUP

SHHHHHP

?!!

BUT OF EVERY-THING THIS SUITS THE TWERP BEST...
HEH HEH... AS A SECOND STATE I CAN DO ALL SORTS OF MUSICAL GENJUTSU WITH THIS FLUTE...

WHOAA-AAAAH ...!!

READ THIS WAY
!
THIS GENJUTSU STOPS ITS PREY'S PHYSICAL MOVEMENTS AND BINDS IT!
GAH... AAUGH!!
SHF
TAK
UNNH...
TELL ME... HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE THE ONE TIED UP?
FINLLP
GRN
DIE, YOU RAT.
TUMP

?!!

THUMP

HUH ...?!

SSHH

HE BROKE MY GENJUTSU WITH SELF-INFLICTED PAIN?!

HE'S USING HIS OWN SHADOW TO MOVE HIS FINGERS ...!

RRUMP

AND THE SECOND MOVE HITS THE TARGET. BASIC STRATEGY, REMEMBER?

TOLD YOU, THE FIRST MOVE IS A FAKE-OUT...

HE WAS JUST PRETEND-ING TO BE TRAPPED...

ARGH!

FWIP

NO... NOT EXACTLY. THE MOST CARELESS MISTAKE YOU MADE WAS SAYING THAT THE FLUTE'S YOUR ONLY WEAPON.

SHWOOO

TWITCH TWITCH

WITH THE ART OF SUFFOCATING DARKNESS, THE CLOSER THE TARGET IS, THE MORE TIGHTLY I CAN BIND IT.

BUT THIS SECOND MOVE... IT'S DIFFERENT FROM THE ONE I JUST USED.

SLUH

...I MOVED IN TOO CARE-LESSLY...

...NO ...

!!

?!

...THAT'S RIGHT... I THREW THAT KNIFE DOWN IN FRONT OF ME AS THOUGH I MISSED...

...JUST SO YOU'D PICK IT UP AND COME AT ME WITH IT...

SCUFF

CAN'T BE...!

TO BE CONTINUED IN *NARUTO* VOL. 24!